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Museums Journal

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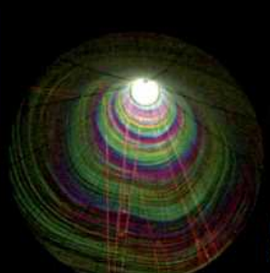
Glasgow Life
Trust to shed 300 posts in two years



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Editorial
Why partnerships need an equality audit

Last month, a new TV series called Who Does What? was screened on BBC2. The programme shadows real couples as they go about their day-to-day lives and then analyses who does the most on the domestic front.

But maybe it's not just bickering couples who row about how to load the dishwasher that need this type of equality audit.

There has been a lot of talk about partnerships between museums over the past few years, and now the idea of linking up to share resources is all the more necessary. But how should these relationships be managed and is it possible to achieve equality, with both parties getting something out of the deal?

There are different models for partnership and some of them are more equal than others. The traditional approach – a national museum sharing some of its objects, or its knowledge, on its terms with a smaller regional museum of its choosing – feels not only dated, but wrong.

The demise of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and its regional agencies has left a gap at local level in terms of leadership, training and support. Moreover, the changing nature of Renaissance, under which the new core museums will not have any regional responsibilities, will only widen that gap.

'There are different models for partnership and some are more equal than others'

Last month, the Museums Association hosted a meeting of representatives from federations from across the UK. The common feeling was that the feds wanted to provide training, networking opportunities and support for museums in their areas, but that they have limited resources to do this.

Some national museums, notably in Liverpool and Wales, are now working with the local federations to increase their capacity to do this kind of work.

There is a striking difference between this more democratic, bottom-up approach and the old-fashioned top-down version – and it has all the makings of a more equal and harmonious type of partnership.

Sharon Heal, editor, Museums Journal
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Falkirk council to switch culture and leisure services to trust status

Council claims summer move will save £1m a year

Gareth Harris

Falkirk council is the latest Scottish local authority to switch its culture and leisure services to a new charitable trust, with the changeover set to take place in July.

The management of Callendar House and Kinneil Museum, as well as the museum store at Grangemouth, will transfer to a trust, which will also run archaeology services.

The council, which faces a budget shortfall of about £60m over the next four years, said the move would save almost £1m annually on non-domestic rates and VAT.

Management of Callendar House will switch to the trust in July

"The body will also have the opportunity to access new forms of funding that are not open to the council," said a council press statement.

A council spokesman added that service, funding and collections agreements were still to be developed.

Council chief executive Mary Pitcaithly said: "During the consultation phase, the unions and employees have asked about the alternative options to establishing a trust.

"The financial pressures facing the council are significant, and therefore any savings not delivered through establishing the trust would need to come from within community services or from other council services more generally."

Bradford council makes Jane Glaister redundant

Ex-MA president is first senior manager to go in council-wide restructure

Rebecca Atkinson

Former Museums Association president Jane Glaister has been made compulsorily redundant from her post as strategic director for culture, tourism and sport at Bradford council.

It is the first senior management role to be cut as part of a council-wide restructure, which will result in up to 2,000 jobs being axed. The restructure will save Bradford council, which has to absorb funding cuts of £56m, an estimated £1.1m.

The culture, tourism and sport department has also been restructured, with museums moved to sit within the regeneration department.

It is not clear what impact the changes will have on the museum service, or how many of the 68 people employed in museum posts could be at risk. A council spokeswoman confirmed all council staff were issued with redundancy warnings before Christmas.

Jane Glaister has lost her job as strategic director for culture, tourism and sport

KP 2874

Mark Suggitt, cultural consultant and former head of museums, galleries and heritage at Bradford, warned that the cuts suggested that the city was looking to reduce its cultural ambitions.

"Large councils such as Bradford need champions with vision and ambition to provide the cultural glue that makes regeneration sustainable," he said.

But Paul Flowers, Bradford council's executive member responsible for culture, sport and tourism, said: "Our role as a council and the services we provide will inevitably change as a result [of cuts], but we intend to protect our cultural heritage and highlights as much as possible."

Glaister was a member of the government's Renaissance in the Regions taskforce and a Sector Skills trustee.

Glasgow Life to shed 300 posts in aim to save £10m

Cuts at culture trust will affect museum service

Gareth Harris

Glasgow Life plans to make 300 posts redundant over a two-year period to save £10.2m over three years.

The trust runs museums, libraries and sport centres for the city council. It has about 3,500 employees, including about 650 museum staff.

"Museums don't exist as a separate entity, so they will be affected, but not disproportionately," said a spokesman for Glasgow Life.

He added that no facilities would close during the cost-cutting exercise. "We will be looking to increase flexibility among the workforce and at ways of increasing income as part of the savings."

Brian Smith, Glasgow branch secretary of the Unison union, said: "We are concerned about how the council plans to raise this so-called extra income." He warned that industrial action would take place if any of the job losses were made through compulsory redundancies.

BAM/HAWKEYE

The opening of Glasgow's Riverside Museum in late spring is still on course

Discussions between Unison representatives and Glasgow Life officials were set to take place as Museums Journal went to press.

John Stewart-Young, former arts and heritage manager at Dundee City Council, said: "It is clear that making such large numbers redundant in Glasgow would affect the whole sector in Scotland, as where Glasgow leads, others often follow."

Maurice Davies, head of policy and communication at the Museums Association, also struck a note of caution.

"Any museum considering moving to trust status should ensure it has a good degree of financial certainty," he said.

"Some charitable trusts should be relatively protected from cuts, as they have long-term funding agreements with their local authority for perhaps five years. It is clearly very risky to have only an annual funding agreement [as is the case for Glasgow Life]."

Meanwhile, South Lanarkshire council will decide this month whether to shut the Hunter House and John Hastie museums.

"The museums are open only at weekends and have a small number of visitors," said Norrie Anderson, the council's executive director (community resources).

"Our intention is to show all the items held at these museums in other locations across the authority, which will allow all the people of South Lanarkshire to see them."

See vox pop, p21

Local authorities pile pressure on arts and heritage

Cuts Monitor reveals the scale and extent of cuts

Rebecca Atkinson

Cuts monitor

Croydon council has recommended deleting its entire heritage and arts service, to save £1.4m.

Following public consultation the council has said it will close the museum and its education programme, retaining the collection for conservation purposes only.

But because the museum received a £933,500 Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant in 2005, the council is now working with the HLF to try to find a way of keeping the venue open.

Elsewhere, **Manchester City Council** is to axe about 2,000 staff – 17% of its workforce. Staff have until mid-March to volunteer for redundancy or early retirement. The council employs 122 people in its museum and gallery service.

Lincolnshire County Council has confirmed that Stamford Museum will close on 30 June.

Community groups will take over the running of Church Farm Museum and Grantham Museum, but a bid for Stamford Museum was felt to be "unsustainable", according to a spokesman.

Birmingham City Council is still consulting on its budget for 2011-12, with a final decision expected next month. But it is considering moving Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery to a trust-operating model, to save an estimated £1.3m in 2011-12 and £2.4m by 2014-15.

Croydon will seek to keep its museum open

Following the decision to move to seasonal opening at **Jersey Museum** to save money, director Jon Carter has said the museum has been able to find a solution to a £1m funding shortfall by outsourcing marketing, design and technical support.

Ken Wells, curator of **Thames Valley Police Museum**, has been made redundant after 11 years in the role. The museum will remain open and be run by the police force.

In brief

Tourism spend to rise

VisitBritain expects a 2% rise in inbound visitor spend this year to £17.2bn, but that is still below the peak of £18.4bn (at today's prices) in 2006. The tourism promotion body also predicts only a 1% rise in the number of inbound visitors this year despite the royal wedding in April, on which its global marketing campaign will be based.

IWM to mark centenary

The Imperial War Museum has announced plans to lead the national commemoration of the centenary of the start of the first world war in 2014. The museum's expanded First World War Galleries, which will be twice the size of the current space, will open in summer 2014. The work is part of a plan to create 20% more visitor space at the museum over the next decade.

Museums' joint initiative

A group of London museums will examine the treatment and views of people with autism and learning difficulties. The project, Our Lives, Past, Present and Future, will run until May with the aim of creating an archive of material at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. The project has attracted a Heritage Lottery Fund grant of £34,800.

Stolen art recovered

Three paintings stolen from Glasgow museums were recovered by police in December. The works went missing from Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum and the Museum of Transport in the 1990s. One of the paintings, by Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot, was spotted in an auction catalogue, which led to the recovery of the other pieces, but it is thought 10 more artworks are still missing.

The clothes show: regency fashion to go on display at Brighton's Royal Pavilion

ROYAL PAVILION AND MUSEUMS, BRIGHTON & HOVE/JIM HOLDEN

Dress for Excess: Fashion in Regency England opens this month at the Royal Pavilion in Brighton. The exhibition celebrates the life of George IV as Prince Regent and as a leader in fashion. The king's coronation robe will be on public display for the first time in 30 years and the costumes will be displayed in several rooms, including a new exhibition space, the Prince Regent Gallery. The exhibition runs until 5 February 2012. Meanwhile, Brighton Royal Pavilion and Museums will be hosting a reception at this year's Museums Association's conference in October. www.museumsassociation.org/conference

Kids charter is launched

Sharon Heal

The campaign group Kids in Museums has launched its 2011 manifesto.

Speaking at the launch at the London Transport Museum, patron Mariella Frostrup said there was concern about different generations not talking to each other, but museums could solve this "inter-generational silence".

"Museums are the best place to go to with your granny," she said.

"Older people often spot things they remember from when they were younger and start chatting about them."

Kids in Museums director Dea Birkett said that one of its campaigns this year will be the Your Museum Cafe project. She said that they would be working with families and museums to produce guidelines for family-friendly cafes.

The manifesto is now also available in Welsh.

www.kidsinmuseums.org.uk/manifesto/

ACE to back purchase grant fund

V&A Purchase Grant Fund to compete for share of ACE's money

Patrick Steel

The V&A Purchase Grant Fund is to be financed by Arts Council England (ACE) from 2012, but it will compete with other priorities for a slice of ACE's £46m grant from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

A spokesman for ACE said that funding levels had not yet been decided, but the council is in talks with the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) over the administration of the fund, which it is envisaged will continue to administrate it.

Janet Davies, head of regional liaison and the Purchase Grant Fund at the V&A, said: "Future arrangements are subject to the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) handover negotiations, since provision of the Purchase Grant Fund budget is one of the existing MLA functions.

Sun Up by Gillian Ayres, was bought by the Victoria Art Gallery, Bath, with the help of a grant from the V&A Purchase Grant Fund

"The size of the grants budget will largely depend on the source, as well as the availability of funds.

"Arrangements, timing and budget are dependent on these DCMS and MLA/ACE negotiations, which I understand are unlikely to be clarified for months. We hope the management of the fund will remain with the V&A, as it is a key part of our UK activity."

The budget for the Purchase Grant Fund this year is £900,000, compared with £1.5m in 1995.

Museums Association director Mark Taylor said: "It is a modest amount of money, but one of the few ways in which museums can enhance their collections."

The future of the fund was raised last month in the House of Lords by Lord Howarth of Newport, who asked for assurances that ministers would continue to provide funding across England and Wales, and challenge philanthropic donors to double up the fund.

The fund has been administered by the V&A, which finances its management, since 1881. According to the V&A, it is always oversubscribed.

ACE is also reviewing the budgets beyond 2012 for Culture 24 and the Collections Trust.

REPRODUCED COURTESY OF GILLIAN AYRES

Museum development officers' funding concern

Switch of funding from the MLA to ACE causes anxiety

Patrick Steel

Several museum development officers (MDO) have been served with at risk of redundancy notices as the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) and Arts Council England (ACE) discuss funding for the network after the end of this financial year.

Museums Journal understands that funding for MDOs has been agreed at the current level up to the end of June and that the MLA has provisionally earmarked £2.7m for 2011-12. Discussions about funding beyond June are ongoing.

Glynis Powell, the MDO representative on the national council of the Association of Independent Museums, said: "Some MDOs employed and funded by Renaissance have [got risk of redundancy notices]. The situation for many other MDOs is a lot less clear. Many are employed and paid for through a patchwork of funds, local councils and museum services. That has always been the tougher format to make work. The current situation with local government cuts makes the situation for these individual MDOs somewhat bleaker."

ACE chief executive Alan Davey

One MDO, commenting on the Museums Association website's Cuts Monitor, wrote: "I would like to know why the MLA isn't working fast enough to secure the network. With rumours that organisations are being asked to tender for the network contract, why aren't the MDOs being secured first?"

Sophie Ainsworth, museum development assistant at Renaissance South West, said: "The MLA is in urgent conversations with local authorities, trying to address the issue and to preserve match-funding wherever possible."

Museums Association director Mark Taylor warned that unless the transfer of the MDO network from the MLA to ACE happened quickly and efficiently, the sector risked losing important knowledge and expertise as MDOs sought work elsewhere.

An ACE spokesman said: "We understand that this is a difficult time for those involved, and we appreciate their hard work, commitment and expertise.

"We will let them and the sector know more detail as soon as we can."

www.museumsassociation.org/cutsmonitor

MA concerned over Bolton plans for disposal

Council refuses to say which objects it will sell

Gareth Harris

Nick Merriman, the convenor of the Museum Association's (MA) ethics committee, has met with a representative of Bolton Council to raise concerns about its decision to sell 41 items from its collections without a public consultation.

The council's executive committee voted in December to dispose of the works and is now tendering for auction houses. But the council will not reveal which pieces have been identified for sale, or their value.

Merriman said that although public consultation is not a prerequisite in the MA code of ethics, but it is implicit in paragraph 6.13 in relation to the risk of damaging public confidence.

"As a result, we ask any organisation that is thinking about a financially motivated sale to tell us about any public consultation it has undertaken in the pro-forma we send them," he said.

Merriman met with Stephanie Crossley, assistant director of adult and community services at Bolton Council, last month when she outlined the context of the proposed sale and the steps that were being taken to ensure that the sale was within the guidance in the MA's code of ethics.

Bolton has identified 41 items for sale

Merriman said she was "helpful and open" in her response to the concerns raised.

"I shall now be making a report to the ethics committee, which will then formulate a view as to whether the sale can be deemed ethical," he added

A council spokeswoman said it was unable to disclose any of the 41 items on the list, as it was "commercially sensitive information".

The council plans to put any money raised towards relocating the museum's stores.

In brief

New kids gallery
Eureka, the National Children's Museum in Halifax, has announced that the Wolfson Foundation has donated £315,000 to its planned Me and My World gallery, which is to open next year. The money now takes the total amount raised to more than £2m, with about £900,000 left to find. Me and My World will replace the My and My Body gallery.

Made in Brum gets cash

Birmingham's Thinktank science museum has secured an £894,000 Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant to develop the Made in Birmingham gallery. The new space, which is expected to open in December 2012, will feature five themed displays with up to 1,200 objects on show. The HLF grant covers 44% of the project's cost.

Council invests in culture
Sandwell Council has revealed details of a four-year £61m investment in leisure and culture capital projects in the Black Country. The 24 projects being developed include heritage schemes such as the restoration of Oak House, Barns and Gardens, a 16th-century timber-framed yeoman's house; and work on the Manor House, a Grade I-listed, timber-framed medieval building.

Cash for National Gallery
The Hintze Family Charitable Foundation has donated £2m to London's National Gallery. The money will be used to improve displays and environmental conditions in a number of gallery spaces in the original Wilkins Building. In recognition of their gift, Room 8 of the National Gallery has been named The Dorothy and Michael Hintze Room.

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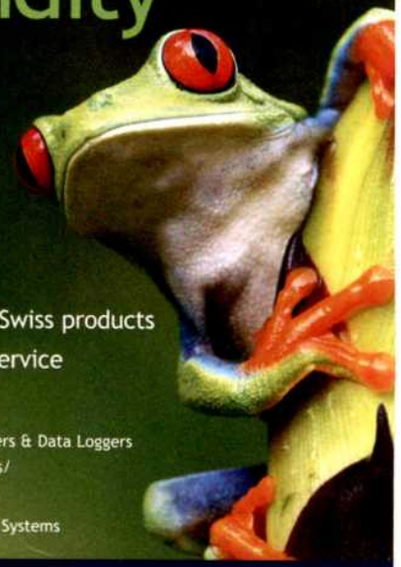

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Fears for funding of V&A Dundee are dismissed

Museum allocated £5m in budget, rather than £15m it had hoped for

Hugh Dougherty

Funding fears surrounding the Victoria and Albert Museum's (V&A) outpost have been dismissed as "unfounded" by Design Dundee, the partnership charged with delivering the project by 2015.

The partnership had been hoping to secure £15m from the Scottish government, but was allocated just £5m in last month's draft budget bill.

A spokesman said the partnership had not expected to receive the full amount, as the Scottish budget has been presented on a one-year basis.

He added that the £5m was not regarded as a shortfall and was "delighted" to have received what was requested.

"The wider fundraising project, based on a three-way split between the Scottish government, other quasi-public and private donations, is being developed at present, and we will be working hard to ensure that it delivers the target amounts for the projects," said the spokesman.

Kengo Kuma's design for the V&A Dundee

The Scottish government has said it remains committed to the project, but added that finalising the details of that commitment would be for the administration elected in May's parliamentary election.

Scottish Labour leader Iain Gray has pledged his support for the project if elected.

Former arts and heritage manager at Dundee City Council, John Stewart-Young, was upbeat about the V&A Dundee's funding future.

"There are several sources of funding to be explored in the short term, but the main thing is to get started," he said.

"Experience has shown that once a great project gets momentum, the key funding partners want to be associated with it."

A Dundee City Council spokesman said: "The council is delighted with the funding announcement and is fully committed to the project as a key partner in its delivery."

Scottish Enterprise, although not directly funding the project, is supporting it by providing staff expertise.

Queen show attracts sponsor for two venues

Tie-ups secured by only Edinburgh and London

Patrick Steel

The touring exhibition The Queen: Art and Image, led by the National Portrait Gallery, has received sponsorship for its London and Edinburgh legs, where an entry charge will be levied, but not for Cardiff and Belfast, where admission will be free.

KPMG, which has previously sponsored exhibitions that have been shown at National Museums Northern Ireland (NMNI), will sponsor only the National Portrait Gallery leg of the tour, while asset managers and solicitors Turcan Connell will sponsor the exhibition at Edinburgh's National Gallery.

Chris Levine's Lightness of Being (2007)

Naomi Conway, head of development at the National Portrait Gallery, said: "KPMG would have seen a proposal with both options. It did look at national sponsorship, but selected to go for London.

"It would have cost about double nationally. If you've got a carefully planned budget, that is a consideration."

KPMG refused to comment, saying conversations about sponsorship were private.

Asked whether he thought the National Portrait Gallery, as lead partner, could have pushed harder for a national sponsor, the director general of National Museum Wales, David Anderson, said: "The original ambition was that there should be sponsorship for all if possible, but it proved not to be possible. When that became obvious, we agreed to try to find our own sponsors."

National Museum Wales is seeking local sponsors for the exhibition, which opens in Cardiff in February 2012.

Anderson said the cultural context in Wales meant that people were not accustomed to paying for exhibitions.

An NMNI spokeswoman said: "Wherever possible, we do not charge for exhibitions."

The tour begins in Edinburgh on 25 June.

● See philanthropy feature, p29

Our Place network saved

English Heritage drops site because of cuts

Gareth Harris

The heritage networking website Our Place has been saved from the threat of closure, it was announced last month.

The site was under threat following the news that English Heritage, which launched the project in 2007, is closing its entire outreach programme (*Museums Journal, January 2011, p10*).

Miriam Levin, English Heritage's former head of outreach, said she was delighted that the Diversity in Heritage Group would take over running the site. The network describes itself as a group of practitioners interested in broadening engagement by professionalising practice and enabling equitable dialogue with communities. *www.ourplacenetwork.org*

New director for Wallace

In-house appointment to replace retiring director

Sharon Heal

The Wallace Collection in London announced last month that Christoph Vogtherr is to be its next director.

Vogtherr, who is a curator at the Wallace and was the acting head of collections from 2008 to 2010, will take over the running of the national museum in October when director Rosalind Savill steps down. He is a specialist in 18th-century French painting.

Chairman of the trustees John Ritblat said: "Having run a fully international competition, it is very satisfying to find the right balance of scholarship and leadership from within the Wallace Collection itself."

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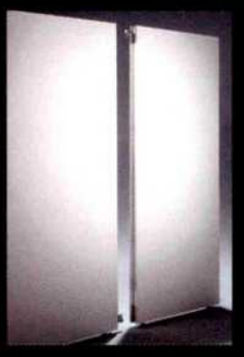

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WORLDWIDE

In love and war: National Army Museum to host Wives and Sweethearts exhibition

Wives and Sweethearts, an exhibition examining soldiers' experience of courtships, weddings, births, separation and death, opens at the National Army Museum, Chelsea, on 9 February. The exhibition also explores the changing role of women in the force, from those who served as cooks and laundry workers to modern army families in which both partners serve. Key exhibits include a love token sent by a soldier from the battlefield at Waterloo and letters sent by combatants in the Falklands, Korean and Gulf wars.

Iraq's National Museum set to reopen this spring

Security still an issue at Baghdad museum

Patrick Steel

Iraq's National Museum could reopen as early as next month.

Keeper of the Middle East collections at the British Museum, John Curtis, who is in regular contact with the National Museum in Baghdad, said: "I think everybody welcomes this, and that the museum should open as soon as possible."

But he added: "Everybody believes that security has improved, but there are still worries about suicide bombers. The main worry [for the museum] is explosions, rather than theft or looting."

Amira Edan, the museum's director, told The Art Newspaper last month that improvements to the 23 galleries were almost finished and electrical systems, as well as roof repairs, display cases, lighting, security systems and air-conditioning.

TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM

A headdress and necklace found in the Royal Cemetery of Ur, southern Iraq

The museum, which was badly looted during the 2003 Iraq War, has been open only briefly since the Gulf War in 1991.

Parts of the museum are currently open by appointment, but the hope is that a full reopening, allowing members of the public to walk in off the street, will be possible.

The US, through its Iraq Cultural Heritage Project, has provided about $8.5m towards upgrades to the museum, including the renovation of its conservation laboratories, storage facilities

A spokesman at the US embassy in Baghdad said: "The Ministry of Culture, through the State Board of Antiquities and Heritage, will determine when the museum will reopen. The government of Iraq is also responsible for security at the museum."

Curtis said the British Museum would consider loans to Baghdad, as well as to Basra, where it is involved with the creation of a museum that will house objects from across southern Iraq. The museum is the first step towards establishing a cultural district that will also include a library and concert hall.

The Friends of Basra Museum was launched at the British Museum in December and is looking to raise £5m towards an opening in 2012.

Funding news

Get a Fair share

Later this month, the Museums Association (MA) will release details on how museums, galleries and heritage organisations can apply for a new funding stream for collections work.

The **Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund**, run by the MA, will focus on time-limited collections work outside the scope of an organisation's core resources. It has been developed from the MA's Effective Collections programme and Esmée Fairbairn's Museum and Heritage Collections Strand.

The MA will award about **£800,000** a year to museums, galleries and heritage organisations through the fund. There will be **two rounds each year**, with application deadlines this year on 31 May and 31 October. Organisations can apply for between £20,000 and £100,000.

The MA is keen to fund projects at an **early stage of development**, when it may be difficult to guarantee tangible outcomes. It wants organisations that are supported to become part of a network to develop ideas, share knowledge and build legacy into projects.

Projects that are eligible to apply to the Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund include research into collections, conservation, collections reviews and initiatives to develop use of collections.

The deadline for the final round of grants for the £1m **Effective Collections** programme is **4 March**.

Among the museums to have benefited from Effective Collections are the Orleans House Gallery, Richmond; Keswick Museum, Cumbria; Berwick Museum and Art Gallery, Northumberland; and Ceredigion Museum, Aberystwyth.

www.museumsassociation.org/collections

Simon Stephens

Michelangelo, *The Entombment* (detail), about 1500–1 © The National Gallery, London

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London Councils funding shake-up may hit culture

Changes to grants programme will lead to services being provided on a local basis

Rebecca Atkinson

There are concerns that cultural activities in London could suffer as a result of London Councils changing its grant programme so that many services are provided on a local, rather than a regional, basis.

London Councils, a thinktank which runs some pan-London services, currently spends about £3.14m a year on culture, tourism and the 2012 Olympics. This money is raised from the individual boroughs and is allocated through a grants programme to voluntary sector projects across the capital.

Following a consultation, London Councils has categorised some services as local. As a result, responsibility for funding them will pass back to boroughs from June.

Whitechapel Gallery director Iwona Blazwick said it made "good business sense" for boroughs to pool resources

Mayor of Hackney Jules Pipe, who is chairman of London Councils' leaders' committee, said: "Borough leaders have agreed a managed transition when it comes to the remaining services. This will allow them more time to establish which services they should continue to fund and give them flexibility to decide what will work best in their own local areas."

But there are concerns that culture and arts organisations will suffer as a result because there is no statutory obligation for councils to continue funding them.

A statement from the National Campaign for the Arts said: "This is an unwelcome development, as a degree of funding provided at a strategic, city-wide level can protect against the worst of individual council budget cuts."

In a response to the proposed changes to the grants scheme, Iwona Blazwick, director of the Whitechapel Gallery and chairwoman of the London Cultural Strategy Group, said it made "good business sense" for boroughs to pool their resources to achieve pan-London objectives.

"Sustained funding for cultural activities will best ensure that there is a balance and rich cultural offer distributed across the city and will address the considerable disparities that currently exist," she added.

End of Museum of

Museum of Museums in Manchester closes after just five months

Sharon Heal

The Museum of Museums at the Trafford Centre, Manchester, has closed just five months after opening to the public.

The museum, which was originally intended to feature exhibitions and collections from museums around the country, announced its closure last month.

But the attraction's current exhibition, Tutankhamun – His Tomb and Treasures, which is in a separate space, will remain open until the end of this month.

The Museum of Museums, which was housed in a renovated warehouse at the Trafford Centre, will be replaced by a commercial exhibition centre.

Any collections and objects that were loaned to the museum by other organisations will be returned to their owners.

The site is owned by Peel Holdings, which also owns the Trafford Centre.

World news digest

Australia: Professional gambler David Walsh opened his 6,000 sq m Museum of Old and New Art outside the Tasmanian capital of Hobart last month. The £45m museum houses his collection of Egyptian mummies, Roman mosaics and more than 500 contemporary works by artists such as Wim Delvoye, Anselm Kiefer and Jannis Kounellis.

China: Work has begun on a museum in the southern province of Sichuan, which commemorates the 90,000 victims of the 2008 earthquake in the region. The $35m museum is scheduled to be finished by May.

India: Municipal authorities in Delhi have approved plans for the Indraprastha power station, on the banks of the Yamuna river, to be converted into an art gallery modelled on Tate Modern. The project will cost about £70m.

Finland: The city of Helsinki has asked the Solomon R Guggenheim Foundation to explore the possibility of creating a Guggenheim Museum in Finland. The study will be completed by the end of the year and will look at how a new museum might fit in with existing arts organisations, its economic impact and the Guggenheim's involvement in its operation.

Oman: Tate has entered into a partnership with the government of Oman whereby the UK museum loans works to the Gulf state and offers technical assistance. The multimillion-pound deal will provide funds for Tate Modern's £215m extension.

US: President Obama has signed into law the Museum and Library Services Act, which requires the Institute of Museum and Library Services to take an active role in research and data collection, as well as to advise Congress on museum and library facilities.

The Museum of Old and New Art opened last month in Australia

US: The Brooklyn Museum plans to return about 4,500 pre-Columbian artefacts to Costa Rica, which were taken from the country more than a century ago. Although the Costa Rican government made no claims on the works, the National Museum of Costa Rica has accepted them, but needs to raise $59,000 in shipping costs.

Compiled by Gareth Harris. Seen in the Art Newspaper, New York Times, Guardian, Sydney Morning Herald and Associated Press

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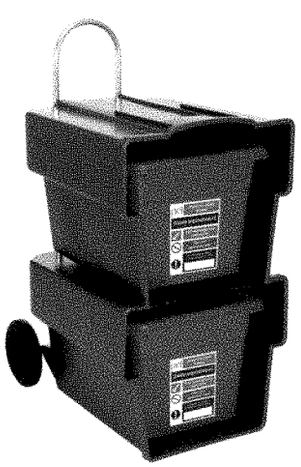


pel
giving history a future

Shortage of community spirit

Museums' education and community activities could be the big losers in the spending cuts

Gary Noakes

The coalition's spending review could signal the end of education and community services in some museums and galleries, it has been warned.

Commentators have said that when it comes to decisions about what to preserve and what to shed in the face of spending cuts, museum and gallery activities regarded as peripheral are often the first to go.

It appears a simple choice – sell collections, close venues or stop non-core activities.

But supporters of such work will hope that few institutions follow the drastic steps taken by English Heritage, which will axe its entire outreach department of 12 staff on 31 March after suffering a 32% cut funding in the comprehensive spending review.

English Heritage is one of the first major cultural organisations to confirm where the cuts will fall. National museums are revising their budgets, but it will be months before it becomes clear where the cuts will be felt.

There may be an indication of what is to come at the Victoria and Albert Museum, where the post of director of learning and interpretation has been downgraded to "head of education" following the departure of David Anderson to become director general at National Museum Wales last year.

"I think that sets the scene for what's going on," says Paul Collard, chief executive of Creative Partnerships, which has overseen more than 8,000 education and cultural projects in England since 2002, but will lose most of its funding in March 2012.

He believes museums and galleries will regret ditching education and outreach schemes. A survey it undertook in 2009 showed that 80% of voters of all parties believed very strongly that children should have the opportunity to explore the arts while at school.

"It's a tragic mistake that the cultural sector is making. It's a very serious misreading of the priorities to balance the budget in this way."

Many museums will know their fate when local authority budgets are confirmed next month. Manchester City Council hit the headlines last month when it announced up to 2,000 redundancies as a result of a 20% budget cut. The details of its 2012-13 budget will be revealed on 8 March and it is certain that the museum service won't get away unscathed.

Community activities may be hit by the funding cuts

Paul Collard: "The sector is protecting what it sees as its core services, at the expense of young people"

Another influence on what regional museums and galleries cut will be the fall-out from the abolition of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA).

One of the main sources of cash for outreach and education over the past 10 years has been Renaissance in the Regions, funding for which is being transferred to Arts Council England in April 2012.

However, Hedley Swain, the MLA's director of programme delivery, says that because hub museums have undertaken outreach and education for so long, they should now be embedded in how they work.

Some regional museums have taken this onboard. Eastbourne's Towner Art Gallery has two programmes working with young offenders and drug users. By far their biggest financial supporter is the local authority, which provides £170,000 of its £462,600 funding. Richard Beales, the museum's outreach and inclusion manager, is hopeful that local authority cuts won't damage the work.

"We have been doing this for the past decade and mainstreamed it so much into our programme that it is not an add-on. It is entrenched with us and the local authority."

However, the Cultural Learning Alliance is concerned that the fate of education and outreach projects may be influenced by the fact that money for school specialisms will no longer be ringfenced, and spending on the arts will be at the discretion of headteachers, themselves coping with reduced budgets. This means local museums and galleries are overlooked for visits.

"I'm going out a lot more to schools because the cost of coaches is prohibitive," says Cas Sanders, learning officer for North Hertfordshire Museums. "For this reason, local museums are quite often losing out."

What national museums can put back into the regions is also under threat as a result of the abolition of the Strategic Commissioning programme next month. This gave 12 national museums £160,000 each a year to fund education partnerships with 20 regional museums.

Mark Taylor, director of the Museums Association, says there's a concern that national museums will revert to concentrating on their own collections and buildings.

"Education is no longer an optional extra, it is critical to what museums do," he says.

"I have urged the minister to ensure that education and outreach does not become the first victim of the cuts."

For those juggling reduced budgets, the next few months look likely to test that belief.

Post-Great Transition: the museum of 2030

Piotr Bienkowski

According to an old Tibetan saying: "If you want to know your future, look at what you are doing in this moment." This captures our efforts at the NWFED (formerly the North West Federation of Museums and Art Galleries) to get our hundreds of members prepared for a dramatically changed future.

The saying works in two ways. First of all, it reminds us that we already have excellent examples of practice in the critical areas that will shape our future: whether it is working with healthcare providers, broadening our audiences or developing more innovative ways of doing business.

Examples that we have been drawing on for our Rethinking the Museum series of strategic insights include Norton Priory working with Halton Borough Council's adult services team, Tameside Museums developing a Moments of Magic programme to improve mental wellbeing, and Preston's partnership between schools and museums focused tightly on higher levels of literacy.

If we look at what we're doing "in this moment", we can find much to inspire us and much that we can and should replicate.

The second way in which the saying works is to remind us that with so much around us changing – "this moment" being so dramatic for our sector, politically and financially – we need to focus on the medium- and long-range future with ever-greater levels of intensity.

Our Rethinking the Museum series includes insights on partnerships, health and wellbeing, new business models and on how museums and galleries in the North West can help create a greater sense of place. They are all intensely practical pieces of thinking, with examples to follow and suggested actions. I would recommend them, and they can be accessed through our website.

The wild card in our series of insights, however, is a vision of museums in 2030. Informed by futurology and some genuinely inspiring work overseas, it is intended to help us break out of pondering an immediate and uncertain future to undertake that most vital of tasks: long-range thinking and willingness to take a few risks.

So what do our museums look like in 2030? Well, some may be better known for their collections or the experience they offer than for the bricks and mortar that surround them, as museums come to represent a more virtual and "distributed" entity. Whatever their shape, the successful museum in 2030 will be a place that unites; that engages; that takes the continued wonder of the original object and fuses it with shared stories and histories.

Some museums will not have survived the Great Transition, but many will have thrived and, according to some of our thinking, become much more important centres of civic activity: places of trust that are engaged in a democratic dialogue, that broach the big issues of our time, that reach out to all sections of society and not just the privileged.

What else lies ahead? There will be new ways to pay, and new ways to play, as technology continues to evolve. Museums will become social networks, we will use technology to share our stories, and in so doing make our museums a central player in defining who we are, and where we are going.

Most importantly, our future will be interactive and will be about listening, reciprocity and sharing authority as well as telling: it will be a conversation of equals.

And in that spirit, I'd urge each and every reader who has made it to the close of this article to go to the NWFED's website, read our insights, and share your own visions of where our future lies.

Piotr Bienkowski is a consultant, academic and chairman of the NWFED. www.nwfed.org.uk

The diary of a national museum director *Part Nine*

Had Bullingdon, the minster's special adviser, on the phone the other day. "Jeremy's in a bad way, and you're the only useful idiot I can find," he bellowed down the line.

It seems that the public's top request on the No 10 website was to give a chimpanzee a chance to run the department for culture and the PM had reluctantly agreed to it!

As soon as I got to the secret War Rooms in DCMS's vast underground stone vaults (Mission: think the unthinkable; do the unspeakable), I was greeted by a chimp in a suit.

I have to admit he seemed to have got things well under control. Groups of big society kids were happily roasting potatoes and squirrels over blazing piles of library books and serving them with a locust garnish to Lord S and other leading philanthropists.

In the far corner, I spotted the SoS with a group of chimps. He was doing something unspeakable with a banana to impress the females.

The fact that the minister for culture looked quite at home with the lady apes and was naively tweeting the whole performance really didn't help.

I saw the need to intervene. I extracted the banana and dragged the SoS away. "Minister," I said, "You've got it all wrong. The people love you for being a cheeky multimillionaire who claimed 1p on expenses for a 12-second phone call. OK, you make the chimp look good, but the people want you to be more hominid, not simian."

My words did the trick. When, a few hours later, he stood on a platform to announce that Rupert Murdoch would buy Tate Media, I felt his success was mine as well.

PAUL BOMMENHOF/DESIGNURIST

Don't touch that thermostat dial

Maurice Davies

For ages, we've been taught that we should do all we can to keep our galleries and stores close to 50% relative humidity to save our collections from a terrible fate. Well, scrub that.

Over the past 15 years or so, scientists have researched what collections actually need. They've found that the vast majority of things are fine in a fairly wide range of relative humidity. This squares with people's experience that their collections are surprisingly well preserved after decades, even centuries, in buildings with supposedly poor conditions.

This evidence is challenging the view that museums should tightly control their internal environment. In the past couple of years this has been a common area of discussion among the international jet-set of elite conservators, who fly the world to attend conferences and specialist meetings. Thanks to the efforts of Britain's National Museum Directors' Conference – and Tate in particular – it's also been regularly on the agenda at meetings of the shady Bizot Group, which is a clubbish gathering of the most powerful directors of the world's grandest art museums.

I've dipped in and out of some of these discussions (although sadly largely without the foreign travel), but never really understood how things should change. Now, all is clear, thanks to a conference at the end of last year, organised by the University Museums Group.

Delegates heard that the main thing to worry about is an object's moisture content. And the best way to control that is indeed to pay some attention to relative humidity. However, changes in relative humidity have a pretty small effect on moisture in objects, especially if they are in showcases, glazed frames or cupboards.

There's a growing international consensus that almost all things in museum collections, even most panel paintings and textiles, are absolutely fine at 40-60% relative humidity. Some leading museums are setting themselves a wider range of perhaps 35-65%. (Quite different rules apply for some things such as certain natural-history specimens and leather; these are best kept in microclimates such as well-buffered cases or storage boxes.)

We've also spent decades battling to control temperature. It turns out that's been largely a waste of time, because as far as collections are concerned it's best to let temperature fluctuate as a way of controlling relative humidity. For visitor and staff comfort it's sensible to aim for 16-28 degrees C in public areas (stores can go cooler with no problems for collections).

And the good news is that UK museums can achieve these conditions without air conditioning, which is good for the planet, too.

For more, see www.umg.org.uk.
Maurice Davies is the head of policy and communication at the Museums Association

The insider

The future is multi-purpose

Maev Kennedy

Welcome to the first meeting of the joint community museum-library-post office-scout hall-dry cleaners-police station and Tasteee Takeaway Chicken Shack liaison committee.

Apologies from Dr Smith, though he says his surgery is very interested in joining the discussion since the neighbouring practice voted to abolish them and replace their premises with a hydrotherapy pool and car wash.

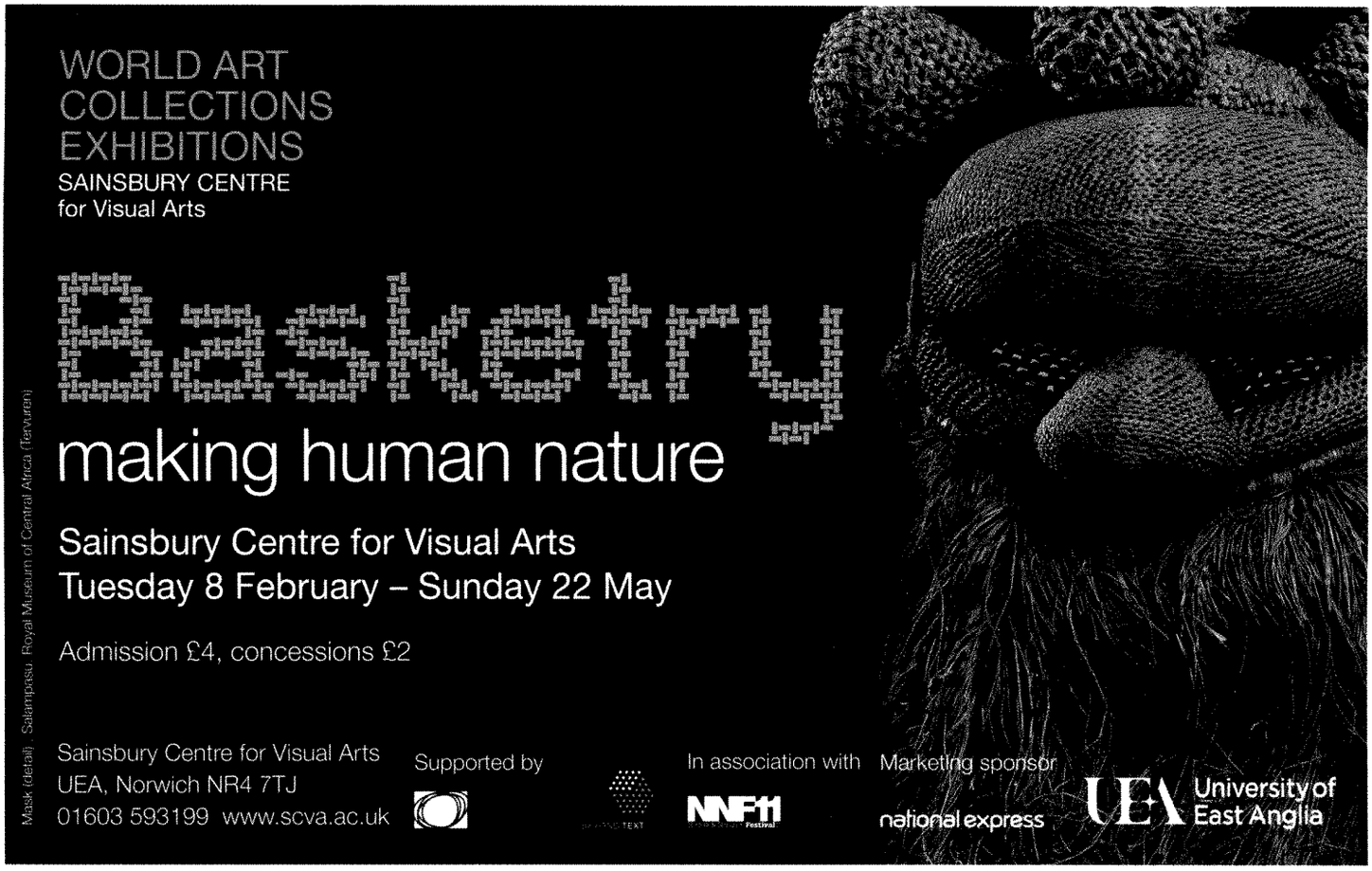
As you know, our main areas of common concern are public access, budgets, facilities, staff cuts, collection care, building maintenance, acquisitions, and the proposed high-speed rail line linking St David's, Southwold and Balmoral, which, in its present form, would take out entirely what we have tentatively described as our "cultural quarter", along with the police station and the Tasteee Takeaway.

If this building survives the threat of being converted into a new "free school" – and in this context I have to say that Akela's suggestion of a new strategic planning badge is inspired – we can probably embrace many of these functions under our own roof, with the police station usefully doubling as front desk security, side-by-side with the post office, which will now take on ticketing and the gift shop, and the takeaway occupying our now sadly closed study centre and cafe.

Spotless Minds have kindly volunteered to help with collection care, in return for setting up their dry cleaning business in the former conservation unit, and our library colleagues have also come up with the superb suggestion, which will help tremendously with our collection storage problems, of issuing a wide selection of the more portable artefacts as loans along with their books.

The library will occupy the space previously reserved for our full-scale replica of the Lusitania – whose ship's cat, I don't have to remind you, was born not five miles from where I speak – a cherished project which we have to admit will not now be complete in time for the centenary in 2015.

Obviously these are very difficult times, but I think we must all view them as a challenge, yes, but also a genuine opportunity.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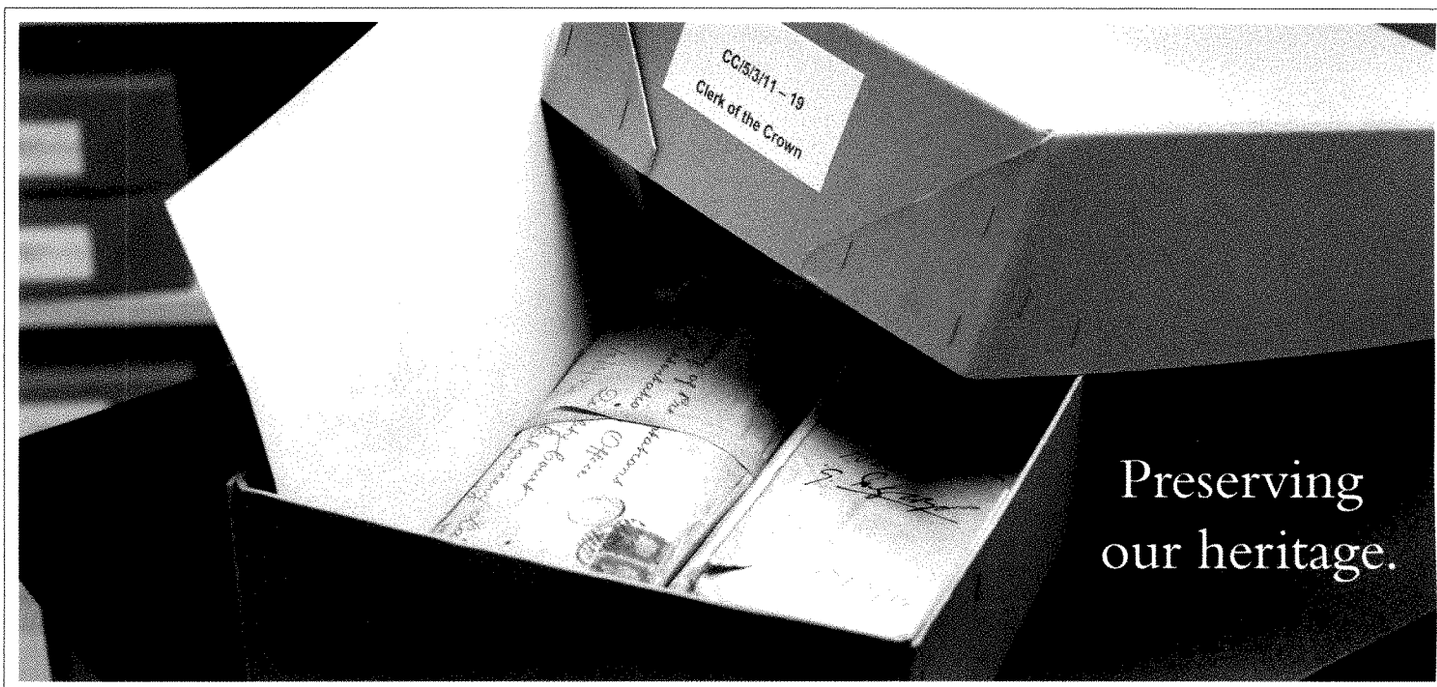

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Why private passions make good public displays

Martin Robinson Dowland

It was an almost unconscious move into the world of collecting. The collections amassed for the Collect show in 2009 at the University of Portsmouth were personal items of importance to the individual collectors.

Most items were supplied by academics including Patti Gaal-Holmes's collection of used tea bags, which she has gathered from around the world. The tea bags, on display in a battered suitcase, looked like an installation and needed a label to explain them.

Other random items went on display in Collect II, in March 2010. A rickety bookshelf, over-filled with an eclectic reading range, collections of twigs, toys and cheap souvenirs all suggested the question "why collect or display them at all?".

For next month's Collect III, the professional alternative to casual, personal and unconscious collecting has been introduced with the help of Portsmouth City Museum. It has joined the project with its own programme, including a behind-the-scenes tour and a lecture linked to the exhibition.

The clash of the unconscious and yet scholarly nature of Collect with the professional world of collecting has been significant. For the exhibition organisers, environmental conditions, security, interpretation and the identity of the project have come under scrutiny.

With this greater analysis of what we are doing in the project, we can look at why people collect privately. We see the balance of public promotion and introspection.

Sonja Robinson's collection of theatre programmes from the 1940s and 1950s are often single pieces of A5 paper typed with an Imperial typewriter. They are visually unspectacular. But when asked to lend them she said: "Look after them, they are my life."

These original documents are the evidence of a greater creative force, the theatre in Portsmouth during the war insisting that the show must go on. They are unspectacular to look at, but of such personal value that they were kept for decades as cherished items which symbolised Sonja's early life.

Part of Collect III will be the Knowledge Promotion Challenge: 12 large picture frames containing images of the most spectacular achievements in the university's recent research projects. But by the end of the show these images will have no value: they were generated from a computer byte and will return to it.

The twigs, the teabags and the theatre programmes will be returned to their homes to be cherished – not for their spectacle but for the personal value attached to them.

One of the advantages of involving the museum in Collect is that the safe storage and display of personal items may increase, so their owners can enjoy them for longer. By bringing these personal items into public view, we can encourage others to do the same.

Martin Robinson Dowland is a projects officer in the faculty of creative and cultural industries, University of Portsmouth

From where I'm standing

Is it right to preserve a city's heritage at the expense of its people?

Felicity Heywood

Becoming a world heritage site can be part blessing, part curse. That's what the city dwellers of Djenne in Mali are finding out.

Designated by Unesco in 1988 for its architecture, particularly for its now famous 13th-century clay-brick Great Mosque, along with houses made from the same material, it has attracted tourism that has been of economic importance to the city.

But now the citizens want to modernise their homes and are being prevented by the UN's cultural agency. Reports say that families want to extend homes, and refurbish the interiors using materials other than clay. But the fear is that this will weaken the structures considerably. The people are unimpressed and are starting to question whether it is worth having world heritage site status while their living conditions cannot be improved.

The national museum in Mali's capital, Bamako, is responsible for the restoration of Djenne's buildings. The director, Samuel Sidibe, has suggested that efforts be made to see whether there is a way to improve the quality of the clay found at the River Niger that has deteriorated over time because of subsiding waters, so that clay can continue to be used on the houses.

Djenne dates back to 250 BC. By 500 AD it had a population of 20,000 people. (It would take London another 700 years to achieve this.) At the time of original construction of the mosque in 1204, the Ghanaian empire was ruling the region. The empire had flourished through trade in salt, copper, gold, cotton, metal goods and leather. It is thought that the mosque was modelled on Ghanaian castles of the time. The Djenne mosque does not feature the domes like the Arab mosques nor does it have Arabic patterns on the walls.

That glorious past is still appreciated in Mali and beyond. It remains the largest clay-brick building on earth.

The situation is a difficult one. It is important to preserve the mosque and some houses, but it does seem unjust to have people endure unfavourable conditions in the present day for a bygone era.

You can close our museums but you can't take our dreams

I am an out-of-work museum professional, writing an open letter to ask the government for more understanding for people in my situation.

My maternity cover contract could not have ended at a worse time – a few months after the election last year. Since then, I have experienced a challenging few months of unemployment.

Despite having several years of professional museum experience and two postgraduate degrees, my local Job Centre is now expecting me to look for other areas of work. They don't want to hear about museums or culture. I am asked constantly: "What else can you do?"

I am treated as a number and not a passionate individual who has a lot more to offer the museum and art gallery sector. I ask the government how they can justify up to £9,000 a year per student in undergraduate tuition fees, when once new graduates find themselves out of work, such qualifications are dismissed. You may take our jobs and close our museums, but please don't take our dreams.

My attitude is this: I have no plan B; and, no, I shall not look at other industries to suit the coalition government. (Or in simple terms, take any crappy job.) What I have gained these last few months is resilience. One day, I will talk, from a public platform, about my experience as a museum director.

I urge other professionals in my situation to keep going. One day, it will all be worth the anxiety and sleepless nights. The museum sector is nothing without the many passionate, hard-working and committed individuals who work in it.

Name and address supplied

Get rid of the big cheese

Has anyone ever considered how biased Museums Journal has become towards local authority museums, how the focus is on politics and funding and how many times we have seen large articles on senior museum personnel?

Isn't it time the magazine provided articles for those of us who surely are the majority of the readership – curators, conservators, education officers, museum assistants and volunteers?

Why focus on purely the Department for Culture, Media and Sport sponsored museums? Us military curators under the control of the Ministry of Defence seem to be forgotten.

I'm sure my professional colleagues in military museums would agree that we face many issues, too – many peculiar to working in a service environment. I am sure that curators governed by other government departments would feel the same.

As a Royal Air Force (RAF) curator, I am fortunate to have a foot in two totally different worlds and, as I thoroughly love working with the RAF, and am proud to do so, I wouldn't have it any other way. But I rely on Museums Journal to keep me updated on issues such as new ideas for display, ethics, conservation and so on.

Surely I can't be the only museum professional frustrated with "our mag"? I think we've all worked out that financial times are not good for anyone, that the Diversify programme has good and bad points, and that some big cheese has grand plans for their museum.

Please throw out the politics and big cheeses and bring in relevant issues which appeal to the majority of those of us who care for, interpret and use our wonderful collections.

Hazel Crozier, curator, RAF College Cranwell

Post dated

Postmen sorting mail at Mount Pleasant, London, 1934

Back on the soap box

I've just written to Sophie Cummings (collections manager, Swindon) to thank her for her letter, printed in the December issue (*Museums Journal December 2010, p20*). It was the most sense I've read in Museums Journal in years. Probably ever.

I've been banging on about most of these issues for years. It's good to know I'm not the only one who wishes that the high headyins would get a bit realistic. And it's not just the Museums Association – though they are just as culpable of inaction.

Back in the day, I worked on a regional development project and came across the issues Sophie was talking about on a daily basis. But whose job was it to assist museums in need, or speak up for the little guy? Local authorities are pushed. Is it in the remit for the nationals? And those higher up seemed to be unwilling to think or delve deeper to get to know the real issues.

I now work for a medium-sized independent museum. I'm lucky to have supportive, forward-thinking trustees; I have a great boss; and I have a member of staff, all of my own! But we face all the issues Sophie mentioned in her letter, and feel like we're fighting against the tide in trying to get our medium-sized voice heard. Let alone in supporting our local small, volunteer-run museums to speak up, be heard, and be supported.

It was interesting that Sophie's letter was printed next to the Vox Pop about spending less on national projects and more locally. That's another one of my soap box rants:

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if nationals had to fill out an application form (like I do to get grant funding from our national representative body) every time they spent over £200, I bet they'd save a packet.

I reiterate Sophie's plea for colleagues in a similar situation to speak out.

Emma Halford-Forbes, museum manager, the Museum of the Black Watch, Balhousie Castle, Perth

RA reaches out

I was delighted to see Felicity Heywood's column on the Royal Academy of Arts' (RA) recent Aware exhibition (*Museums Journal January 2011, p19*).

She suggests that the RA should work with schools all over London to break the perceived exclusivity of the academy. In fact, the RA presents tours, self-guided visits and workshops for primary and secondary students. In 2009/10, over 20,000 students from throughout London participated in these activities. To encourage students beyond London to engage with the RA, we offer the A-Level Summer Exhibition Online and, now in its 20th year, the RA Outreach Programme of life drawing workshops.

The RA attRAct programme for A-Level art students in seven north London boroughs offers 60 students practical workshops with artists, studio visits and mentoring by students in the RA Schools in order to increase their confidence and creativity.

The RA presents workshops to adults involved with Capital A, an organisation that serves the homeless, and collaborates with Kids' Company, offering workshops to young people and their families. Last year also saw a significant increase in the RA's Access Programme.

Because the RA receives no government funds, these activities are made possible by the very generous support of private, corporate and foundation donations and a strong commitment on the part of the entire RA to engage with a diverse public.

Beth B Schneider, head of education, Royal Academy of Arts, London, www.royalacademy.org.uk/education

In the March issue of Museums Journal

- **Museums and university partnerships – why sharing research benefits all**
- **Tracking disposal – where the objects you get rid of end up**
- **Museums and popular music**
- **Reviews: Valence House, Barking and Dagenham; Chartism, Newport Museum; Impressionism, National Museum Cardiff; Bolton Lives Gallery, Bolton Museum**
- **Plus news, comment, letters, jobs and much more**

www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal

Museum Practice online

- **The latest issue of Museum Practice explores the issue of lighting. It includes case studies on museums that are making use of LED lighting and looks at how they can make the best use of daylight**

www.museumpractice.org

Vox pop

Is trust status the answer for cash-strapped local authority museums?

Shirley Collier
chief executive, Scarborough Museums Trust

"Is trust status the answer for cash-strapped local authority museums?

Not if being strapped for cash is their defining characteristic! Trust status alone is neither the salvation nor the sin bin of the sector in times of economic frugality. A poorly drafted contract between a newly formed trust and a local authority will never enable a museum to blossom.

If, however, the local authority embraces the benefits of independence and is prepared to relinquish control, then the granting of trust status can be a turning point. The key issues are clarity of expectation, degree of independence and likely pace of change. With these resolved, the lack of dowry is unlikely to ruin the partnership."

Maggie Appleton
chief executive, Luton Cultural Services Trust

"Trust status allows museums to act creatively, assertively and independently in response to funding reductions.

It is not the panacea for all financial worries – indeed many new ones emerge running an independent business and charity.

And it is absolutely the wrong answer for a struggling museum whose relationship with the local authority has broken down. But with a carefully developed funding agreement and, even more importantly, the right relationships with the local authority (they have to want it to succeed as much as you do), the freedom to think differently and to take charge of your own destiny can make it a very positive answer indeed."

Brian Hayton
treasurer, Museums Association

"Recent research suggests that trust status is broadly cost neutral and, in any event, it takes considerable time, effort and investment to implement. Therefore it is not the panacea that some in local government imagine it to be. Its benefits come into play only after time has elapsed.

The real answer to the immediate problem is putting forward creative cost-cutting recommendations in areas such as centrally imposed costs (central establishment recharges, privatised building management charges, excessive overtime payments); museum controllable costs (operating unnecessary air conditioning, opening when few people want to visit, for instance after dark in winter); unprofitable trading and simply trying to do too much with limited resources."

Tony Butler
director, Museum of East Anglian Life, Stowmarket

"Museums need diverse and sustained income streams and trust status does not automatically make organisations entrepreneurial.

The resilient museums will use their assets most creatively, so I think the really sustainable trusts will be totally independent. Hybrid trusts, where the local authority retains ownership of the assets, are at a disadvantage.

As well as grants, museums need access to commercial finance so they can invest in income development. To do this they should have option to use their assets (eg, buildings) as surety. Museums should be business minded and opportunistic, while exuding progressive values and a sense of social justice. A culture of independent, social enterprise is the best way to achieve this."

KP2874

Back to basics

Ken Arnold and *Thomas Söderqvist* reveal their Dogme-style manifesto for creating engaging science, technology and medicine exhibitions

Human skeletons from the Wellcome Collection, London

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Just over 15 years ago, Danish directors Lars von Trier and Thomas Vinterberg spearheaded Dogme 95, a manifesto to purify the art of film-making. The aim was to engage audiences more profoundly and make sure they weren't distracted by over-production. The Dogme manifesto ruled out special effects, post-production changes and other tricks in order to focus on the story and the performances.

Since then, writers, theatre directors and other arts practitioners have all found inspiration in Dogme 95's back-to-basics philosophy.

Dogme has been criticised, as have some of the films made according to its rules, but as exhibition producers, this classic vow of chastity has inspired us as a way of guiding and sharpening the creative practice of making science, technology and medicine exhibitions. ▶

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Paintings by Jane Gifford on display at the Wellcome Collection's Asleep and Dreaming exhibition (2007/8)

These rules have been written and published with almost indecent speed. They are deliberately provocative prompts for further discussion.

This manifesto is not a definitive set of working proposals, but a draft, which will no doubt be modified and sharpened through challenge and feedback. And anyone who knows the institutions we are based at will be aware that the exhibitions we have presided over have often not followed one or more of these rules.

This manifesto is almost reference-free, but this does not mean we think the ideas are purely our own. There are vast bodies of literature on science communication, exhibition making, art history and museology; we have read some of this literature and been influenced by it. We also have learned much from the museums we have visited.

1. Exhibitions should be research-led, not a form of dissemination

Curators should use exhibitions to find things out (for themselves and for their visitors) and not just regurgitate what is already known. Good curators are inspired and imaginative researchers who find and then build on the investigations of experts and colleagues, juxtaposing varied understandings about their chosen topic. They add their own insights and gradually come up with new ideas and perspectives.

2. A scientist should always be involved in the exhibition, a technologist if it is about technology

Don't shy away from drawing on real expertise in interpreting a topic or finding exhibits. But this is not to say that the aim of the exhibition is simply to give voice to the views of

Arnold and Söderqvist: our inspirational shows

Thomas Söderqvist

"The Danish Museum of Art & Design borrowed a gamma scanner (see p27) from us for its 2004 Industrial Icons show. Its display opened our eyes to the aesthetic dimension of contemporary medical technology.

My favourites from our own museum are Oldetopia and Primary Substances (2009). I've also been inspired by Berlin's Neues Museum for the beautiful use of its rooms."

Thomas Söderqvist is the professor of the history of medicine and director of the Medical Museion, Copenhagen

Ken Arnold

"Out of the Wellcome Collection's exhibitions, I'd say my favourites are Skeletons (2008), From Atoms to Patterns (2008) and Sleeping and Dreaming (2007/8). If I'm encouraged to be less self-serving, I'd choose Eyes, Lies and Illusions (2004/5), and Spectacular Bodies from the Hayward Gallery, London, and L'ame au corps (1994) at the Grand Palais, Paris, and a show on Walker Evans's postcard collection (2009), at the Metropolitan Museum, New York.

One show I really admired was Traffic Art: Rickshaw Paintings from Bangladesh at the Museum of Mankind (1988-1991)."

Ken Arnold is the head of public programmes at the Wellcome Collection in London. He is a visiting professor in medical science communication and museology at the Medical Museion in Copenhagen

PHOTOGRAPHY ADRIAN BROOKS (ARNOLD); PHOTOGRAPHY MASUAD GOLSORKHI © UNIVERSITY OF CAGLIARI (CLEMENTE SUSINI WAX FIGURE, 1804); © NEUES MUSEUM, BERLIN (NEFERTITI)

these experts. They are not, nor should they be encouraged to see themselves as, the curators, but it is vital that their perspectives are present in the final exhibition.

3. Be clear about exhibitions being "multi-authored"

Exhibitions emerge from curatorial collaborations between experts and designers. But a show's funders, the institutional context and other stakeholders have a bearing on the final outcome; it should be possible for exhibition visitors to find out about these influences. The project teams who make exhibitions deserve to be credited. Those responsible for the show not only need to take a bow, they also need to be held responsible for its contents and impact.

4. Use only original material

Exhibitions should engage audiences with original material rather than reproductions and props. If you cannot illustrate a topic with original artefacts, images and documents, ask yourself if an exhibition is the best way to make the point. Models, replicas and reproductions can be shown, but only if this is the point of showing them. Reproductions of artworks should not be used, unless the work's natural medium is "facsimile" – for example, digital photographs. The use of scientific and medical images raises complicated questions, such as what is the "original" format of a microscopic image of a cell? Most scientific images today are minted as digital data, and their final appearance invariably owes much to enhancements and cropping. How this material should be displayed and labelled needs consideration. It is often better to leave it out all together.

5. Never show ready-made science

Focus on the processes of science: science in the making;

Top right: Thomas Söderqvist admires Berlin's Neues Museum, shown here displaying Nefertiti. Above right: Spectacular Bodies at the Hayward Gallery, London, is among Ken Arnold's favourite exhibitions

the triumph of discovery; the frustration and blind alleys explored along the way. Also, look at the social and cultural processes of scientific ideas becoming accepted and embedded.

6. Jealously guard a place for mystery and wonder

Exhibitions provide opportunities to explore topics in ways that bring new light to sometimes forgotten or less-well understood aspects of medicine, science, technology and their histories. But this urge to demystify subjects should not be allowed to render exhibitions earnestly didactic. Deliberately include some exhibits about which less, rather than more, is known – curious exhibits that just cannot completely be accounted for. Visitors should leave exhibitions wanting to find out more.

7. Reject most exhibition ideas

Exhibitions represent the meeting point between subjects and material culture, and can be approached from either end – themes or objects first, or a mixture of the two. But often, topics that seem promising will not be worth developing because there simply aren't good enough objects with which to explore or support them. Similarly, many areas of material culture end up just not being interesting enough to make a show about. Too often, exhibitions are made from empty ideas of stupid objects. It is worth searching for a topic and a set of objects that harmoniously amplify and mutually enrich each other.

8. Leave out as much as possible

Less is usually more in exhibitions. Visitors will remember and enjoy looking at 10 carefully chosen things more than a 100 that are reasonably well selected. The most important aspect of an exhibition is its outer boundaries, which keep out the mass of distractions that lie beyond. In the digital era, a core value of a museum exhibition is that it makes its point through displaying a few selected original objects.

9. Embrace the showbusiness of exhibitions

Audiences come to exhibitions in their leisure time and deserve to be lifted out of themselves. They will respond to the drama of the best exhibits, displays, design, writing and lighting. Make sure that all of this is done well and given the greatest polish. This will enhance the presence of the objects and the impact of the ideas. Don't be ashamed to admit that making exhibitions is, in part, a matter of putting on a show.

10. Celebrate the ephemeral quality of exhibitions

Catalogues, web-presence and filmed versions of exhibitions can lengthen the shadows cast by exhibitions, but they will never come close to keeping alive the actual experience of visiting a show. This is an important part of the magic of exhibitions. Like good pieces of theatre, they gain much of their energy by being around for a limited time and then disappearing. The fact that they are time-limited gives their makers a degree of freedom to experiment and be daring. Grasp it!

11. Make exhibitions true to the geography of their venues

The principle is that knowledge is "situated" – the context in which we contemplate and acquire it can seem as important as the ideas or facts themselves. Exhibition makers need to think hard about how to work with the "place" of an exhibition. Consider what is lost in touring an exhibition where the subject becomes detached from the local context. The country, the city, the venue, the room, and the set and design of an exhibition, even the showcases and the orientation of individual objects – all have a bearing on the meanings that audiences derive from them.

12. Avoid artificial lighting

Use natural light where possible. Start with the light available and build up from it. If possible, reveal the windows and keep the doors open. Let the natural layout of the building be apparent, make it clear where you have introduced false walls. This will enable visitors to keep a sense of where they are. And don't fall into the trap of imagining that the background for an exhibition has either to be a neutral black box or a pristine white cube. Ideally, a show should look and feel very different on a midsummer morning to a winter evening.

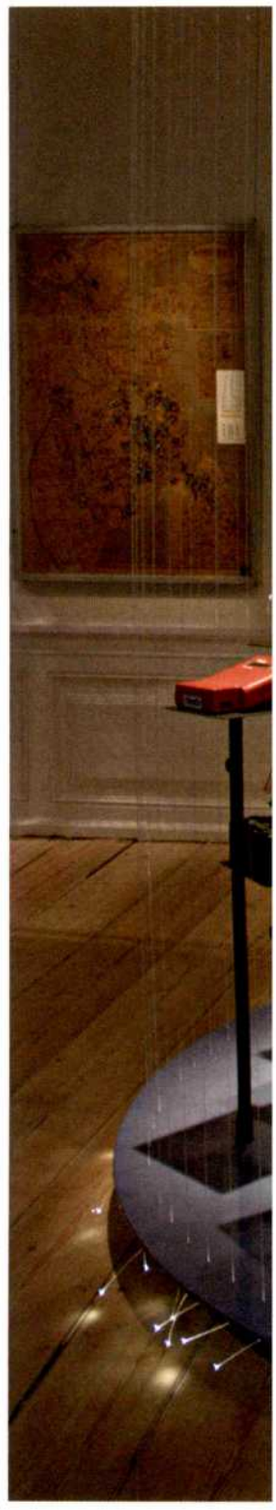
13. Always involve more than one sense

It is impossible for visitors to turn off their non-visual senses in an exhibition – they will hear, touch and smell things no matter what. So make sure that some of the tactile, audio, or olfactory experiences of an exhibition are curated. Exhibitions work by teasing their visitors into thinking that they could get close enough to what they see to touch it, even while making sure they don't. But curators should think about how to introduce at least a few objects that visitors can touch. Never use artificial sounds or odours, but try hard to find ways to enhance the audio and olfactory qualities of the original objects, getting visitors to use their ears and noses.

14. Make exhibitions for inquisitive adults

If you aim at educationally under-achieving primary school children, it will be impossible to engage anyone else (and you are unlikely to engage even your target audience). Many children and teenagers are keenly attracted to adult culture, but very few adults see the attraction of young material. Never make exhibitions for educational purposes – other media and methods are more effective. It's also worth bearing in mind

Right: Abdul Mamoon and Syed Ahmed Hossain's painted rickshaw, shown in Traffic Art at the Museum of Mankind, London (1988-1991), one of Ken Arnold's favourite shows



© THE TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM (RICKSHAW); DANISH MUSEUM OF ART & DESIGN (GAMMA SCANNER); MEDICAL MUSEION (SPLIT AND SPLICE)

that exhibitions are, by their nature, a "childish" medium, bringing out playfulness in all of us. This should be encouraged, but to focus deliberately on young audiences reaps diminishing returns.

15. Remember that visitors ultimately make their own exhibitions

Some visitors might not be interested in reading what the curators write, while others might not look at many objects. Some will be interested in aspects of a topic that the curators might not have come across. Because of this, when an exhibition opens, it is only ever the second or third draft of an idea that will, through revision, reach maybe its eighth or ninth incarnation by the time it closes. Exhibitions should be alive, and change is a vital part of life. Even in the most "stable" shows, lights will need adjusting and labels redrafting. An exhibit might even have to be removed or replaced. More radically, some exhibitions should be deliberately half-finished, or set up so that updates can be added halfway through.

16. Make exhibitions the jumping off place for further engagement

Good exhibitions are the point of departure for a longer relationship. The value of exhibitions should only partly be judged by analysing how many people come, how long they spent in a show and what they think of it. On this basis alone, most exhibitions are foolishly expensive ventures, particularly in these cash-strapped times. Don't forget that, just occasionally, exhibitions can really change visitors' lives and this is worth a lot. Effective exhibitions can also bring in new objects to museums, have an impact on recruitment, add to shop sales, improve the organisation's reputation, and provide a context for corporate celebrations. There is a virtual avalanche of cultural capital that can flow from them: this should be valued from the start.

17. Don't be afraid to bend, break or reinvent the rules

Above right: Gamma scanner at the Industrial Icons, Danish Museum of Art & Design, Copenhagen (2004). Above: instruments for measuring bodily functions at the 2009 Split and Splice exhibition staged by the Medical Museion, Copenhagen.

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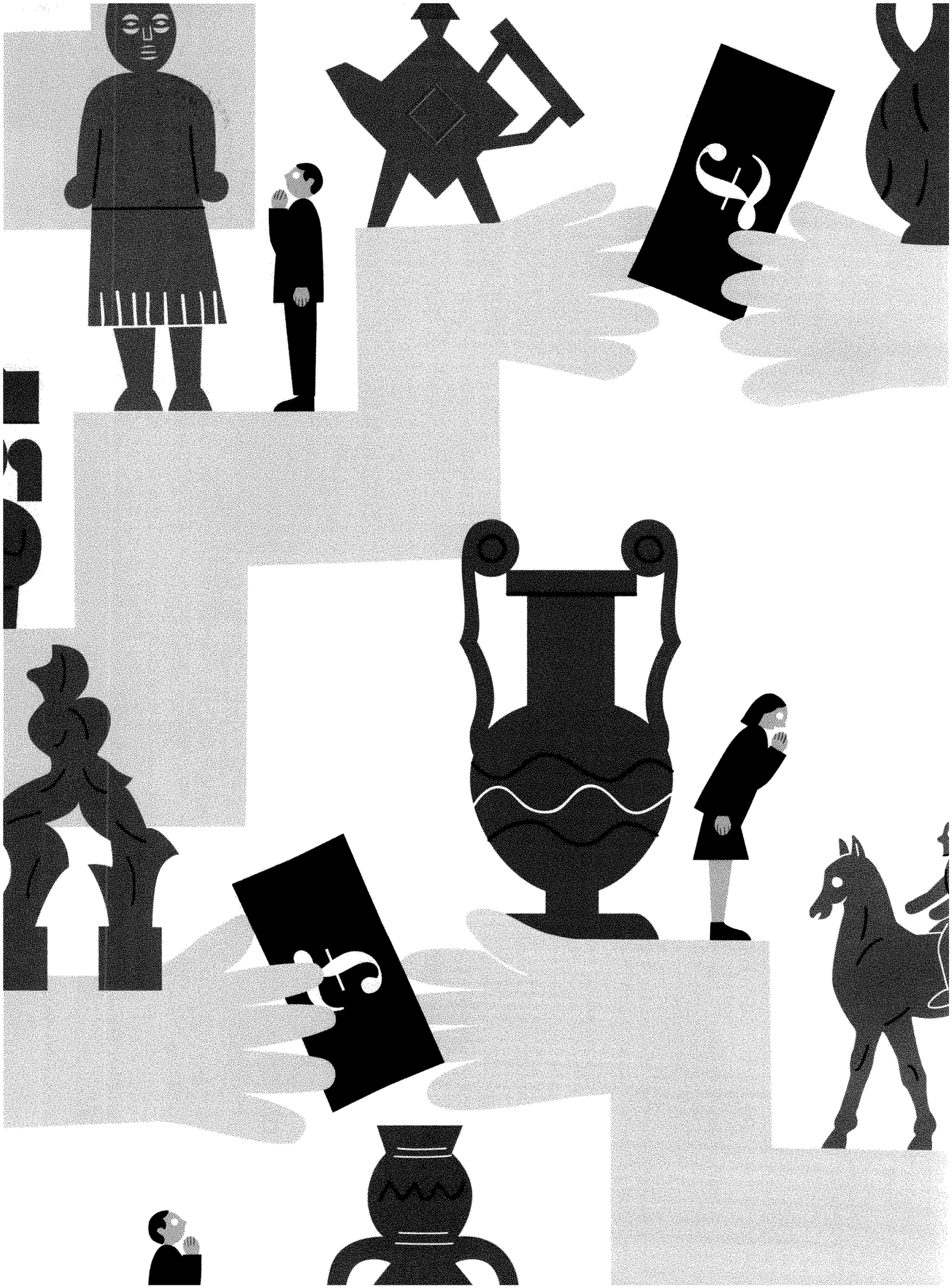

Money talks

What can museums in the UK learn from the US model of philanthropy? *Katrina Burroughs* reports

University of Central England ALIPORE CAMPUS Library

One of the coalition's big ideas for arts and culture is to encourage philanthropy, with culture secretary Jeremy Hunt looking enviously at the US, where cultural giving per capita is £37 a month compared with just £6 in the UK.

Hunt wants to see corporate sponsorship and private donations become a significant slice of income for museums and galleries in this country. But some museum professionals fear this is simply paving the way for withdrawal of state funding, although Hunt insists this is not the case.

"Philanthropy is not about replacing state funding with private support," said Hunt at the launch of the government's philanthropy action plan in December. "Nor is it about importing a US model wholesale into the UK. Over-dependence on endowments has been as dangerous to cultural organisations there as over-dependence on state support is here."

So what is Hunt's vision for a UK-style philanthropy model? He says the aim is to "combine the best of US-style philanthropic support with the best of European-style public support". What does this mean in practice?

Firstly, there is some new money on the table. The philanthropy action plan included an £80m fund for organisations to invest in "match funding" schemes. This means the cash will go to projects that raise "at least" the same amount from private sources.

Meanwhile, a department for culture report on philanthropy by Neil MacGregor, the director of the British Museum, was published in December. This explores how privately donated endowments (capital that is used to provide an income) might be attracted to support national museums.

Arts management consultant David Gordon was chief executive of Milwaukee Art Museum from 2002 until 2008, during which time he eliminated the institution's $30m debt. He points to the long history of philanthropy in the US. "Except for the Smithsonian, arts organisations have always been funded by the private sector," he says.

Gordon, who was director of the Royal Academy of Arts in London from 1996 to 2002, says the difference in the UK is that there's the feeling that it's the state's duty to support museums and galleries. And he says the US culture of giving is driven by the link between philanthropy and social status.

"US society values people who give generously to good causes," Gordon says. "If you're seen to be giving, your respect is enhanced. There's no honours system in the States, and giving is a way people acquire a reputation for being good citizens."

In her paper on philanthropy in the UK, Could the Rich Give More?, Theresa Lloyd, a consultant on fundraising in the non-profit sector, concludes they could, if approached in the ▸

How to develop philanthropy for your museum

- Develop a fundraising department – start by sending a member of staff on a course.
- Refine your pitch. Be as articulate on why you need funds as you are about the highlights of the collection.
- Radiate competency. Donors will only give if they are reassured their money will be properly administered.
- Institute an all-board giving policy. It needn't be much, but it will encourage donors.
- Remember, each contact counts. Chief executives may cultivate the major patrons, but bear in mind that every member of staff meets potential donors daily.
- Show appreciation. From private tours to on-site parties, devise exclusive events to thank donors for their support.

ILLUSTRATION BY JAMES GRAHAM

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Pablo Picasso, *At the Lapin Agile*, 1905, The Walter H. and Leonore Annenberg Collection, Gift of Walter H. and Leonore Annenberg, 1992, Bequest of Walter H. Annenberg, 2002 (1992.391); *The Actor*, 1904–05, Gift of Thelma Chrysler Foy, 1952 (52.175); *Saltimbanque in Profile*, 1905, Bequest of Scofield Thayer, 1982 (1984.433.269). All works from The Metropolitan Museum of Art. © 2010 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo: Don Pollard.

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correct way: "There are far too many organisations whose management of significant prospects and really major donors is inadequate – undertaken by inexperienced and junior staff, with no engagement by trustees or senior staff outside the fundraising team."

Steve Little, director of the Renaissance South East hub, believes many prospects are being simply ignored. The hub got consultants, The Management Centre, to look at improving the commercial offer of eight museums. To test fundraising skills, the consultants wrote a letter to each museum, and pretended it was from Yorkshire pensioner Ethel Postlethwaite. She said how much she had enjoyed visiting the museum, and confided that since her husband died she was looking for new hobbies.

"The consultants planted lots of indicators that the person had money and was interested in the museum," says Little. "Then they stapled a £10 note to the letter and waited for the response." Only one museum sent a brief letter of thanks.

"The National Trust would have invited her to social events and sent someone round to advise her about her will," says Little. "It's a question of training. We've sent members of staff on the National Arts Fundraising School course, which is excellent – but with cuts, the first thing that goes is often training."

The US culture of lifetime giving is also underpinned by a simple tax-relief system where the tax benefit of a charitable donation goes to the donor. If a US taxpayer gives cash, they can deduct its value from their income before income tax is calculated.

In the UK, it's more complex. For a lower-rate taxpayer, the tax they have paid on the donation can be claimed back by the charity, under Gift Aid. If they are a higher-rate taxpayer, they can claim back the difference between the lower-rate tax claimed by the charity and the higher-rate tax they have paid. But, for these givers, there is an upper limit of £500 on the amount of benefit that any donor can receive, even if they give millions.

In America, full-board giving, where every member of the museum board or trust makes a regular donation, is expected. Verity Haines, the national arts director of Arts & Business, says the practice influences trustee selection.

"In the US system, at the Metropolitan Museum or MoMA, the practice is to have people on their boards that are in a position to make a difference to their finances," Haines says. "Full-board giving is not a tradition in the UK, and board members here are chosen to represent a diversity of perspectives."

But Haines believes the US model is gaining popularity among donors. "Increasingly, prospects are asking, 'Does your board give?' If the answer is no, you will have a problem... How can you ask others for money if you aren't prepared to give yourself?"

In the UK, donors tend to support metropolitan museums. This is almost unavoidable: corporate sponsorship is a commercial investment that must be placed where it will work hardest for shareholders, and wealthy individuals prefer to give to high-profile collections with reassuringly professional development departments.

Colin Tweedy, chief executive of Arts & Business, says 75% of philanthropic donations and 55% of corporate sponsorship goes to London. "There's a huge concentration on the big institutions." He adds: "It's the smaller concerns I fear for. Tate has fundraisers as good as anyone at the Met, but there are hundreds of small museums terrified they're going to get their grants cut, and they don't know how to reach out to philanthropists. We now need to create a model of giving outside of the metropolitan centres."

In the US, museums outside the wealthier conurbations have been hit by the recession, but American philanthropists, especially the self-made variety, take a pride in their roots that can result in giving at a local level. As David Gordon points out: "You only need one local billionaire."

> 'There are hundreds of small museums terrified that their grants will be cut'

Alice Walton, heiress to the fortune of retailing giant Wal-Mart, is building a museum in a small town in her native Arkansas. Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art promises to be a world-class collection that will "encourage community uses and activities as one of its highest priorities".

UK national museums already benefit from the benign US system through American Friends groups. Two years ago, American legal scholar Arthur R Miller donated almost 2,000 prints by 19th-century Japanese artist Utagawa Kuniyoshi, valued at several million dollars, to the American Friends of the British Museum.

The museum's director, Neil MacGregor, concludes in his report: "American taxpayers enjoy greater fiscal incentives to give objects to UK collections than do their British counterparts – an anomaly that ought to shame us into speedy action."

He proposes extending the Acceptance in Lieu scheme, which allows works to pass to the state on the death of donors, in lieu of tax, to living donors. It's probably not possible to transplant the US system here, but there are some practices that could be imported to boost income from private sources. But first, public feeling needs to change so that it becomes more acceptable for private donors to support what are seen as public-sector projects.

Katrina Burroughs is a freelance arts journalist

Neil MacGregor's report on endowments for national museums: www.culture.gov.uk/publications/7642.aspx

DCMS 10-point plan to encourage philanthropy: www.culture.gov.uk/news/media_releases/7631.aspx

Case study: Mary Rose Museum, Portsmouth

At the Mary Rose Museum in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, chief executive John Lippiett has been raising funds towards the conservation of the ship's hull and the development of a new museum for the past eight years.

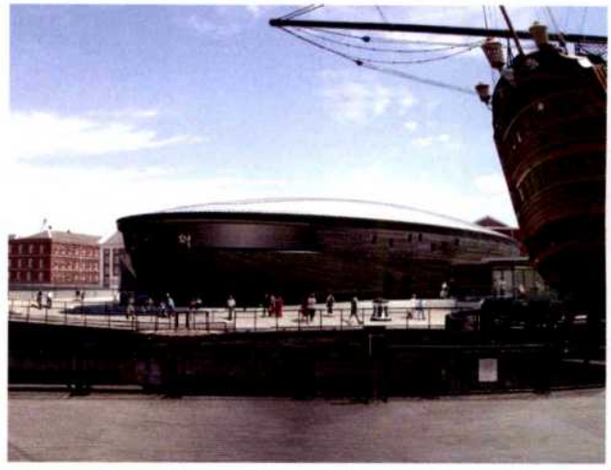
Lippiett, a retired rear-admiral, says that fundraising for the £35m project hasn't been plain sailing. "Five years ago we put in a bid to build a new museum to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) and failed at the first hurdle. They said one of the reasons we failed was that we had insufficient fundraising capacity."

He recruited a team that included two experienced fundraisers and a secretary to run a database of donors. "And we set up an appeal committee, chaired by one of our trustees. The next time we approached the HLF, in 2008, we achieved a £21m grant, on condition that we raised match funding of £14m."

"While the committee set about recruiting individuals to join the Mary Rose Commodores' Club (for those donating between £10,000 and £100,000), we concentrated on approaching the trusts and foundations that support heritage causes. At the start, donations from the Wellcome Trust and the Garfield Weston and the Fidelity foundations lifted our appeal off the ground and gave others the confidence to back us."

He says the team broadened its approach to attract corporate sponsorship, gaining two large deals before the recession bit.

With just £3m left to raise, Lippiett looks back on the fundraising and describes it as, "five years of sheer hard grind".



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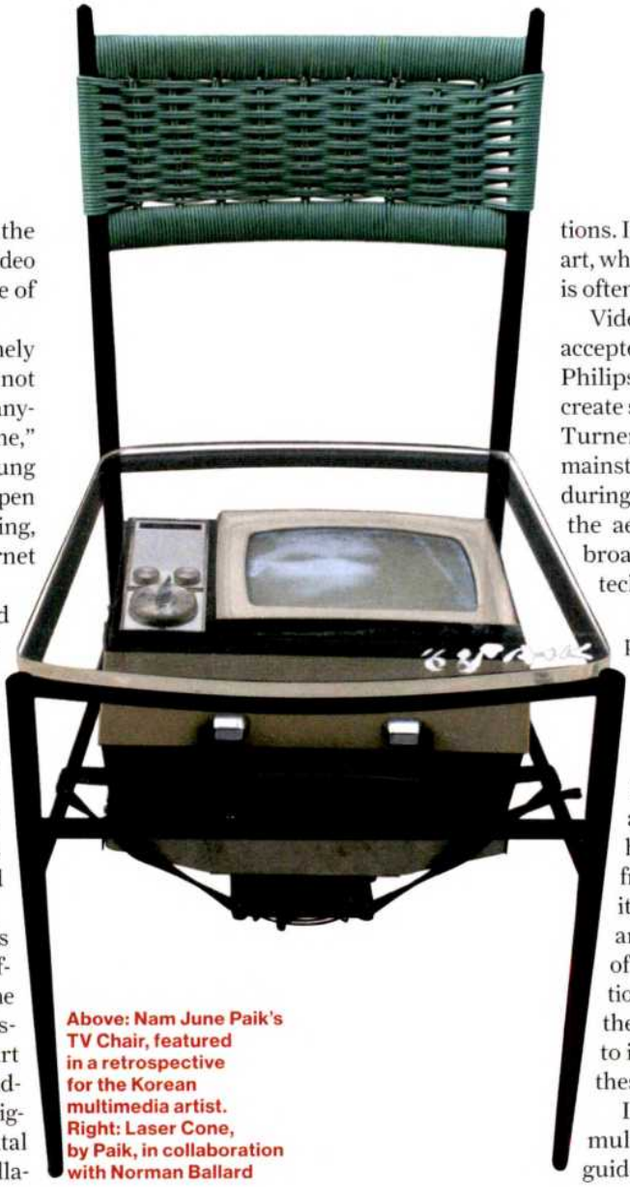
Digital futures

Museums and galleries have been rising to the challenge of displaying, collecting and preserving new-media art. *Abbas Ali* investigates



Above: Nam June Paik's TV Chair, featured in a retrospective for the Korean multimedia artist. Right: Laser Cone, by Paik, in collaboration with Norman Ballard

Tate Liverpool is currently showcasing the work of Nam June Paik, the Korean-born video artist and performer whose inventive use of technology is particularly relevant today.

"Paik's significance cannot be more timely than now, when creating visual images is not limited to a small number of artists, but to anyone with a digital camera or a mobile phone," says co-curator of the Tate show, Sook-Kyung Lee. "He was a passionate provocateur of open communication and free public broadcasting, which are mostly realised in today's internet environment."

The exhibition, which been developed with the city's Foundation for Art and Creative Technology (Fact) and runs until 13 March, is the first UK retrospective of Paik's work. The artist, who died in 2006, quickly seized on the possibilities of video during the 1960s to create eye-catching and iconic moving images such as Zen for TV, as well as going on to use the medium as part of installations such as TV Garden and TV Cello.

The work being done by many of today's artists using digital technology is very different from Paik's early video work, but some of the issues around conservation and display are similar. The term new-media art refers to a diverse array of practices including video art, sound work, internet-based digital artwork, and work that combines digital processes with traditional analogue installations. It is sometimes referred to as time-based art, which can have aspects of performance and is often participatory.

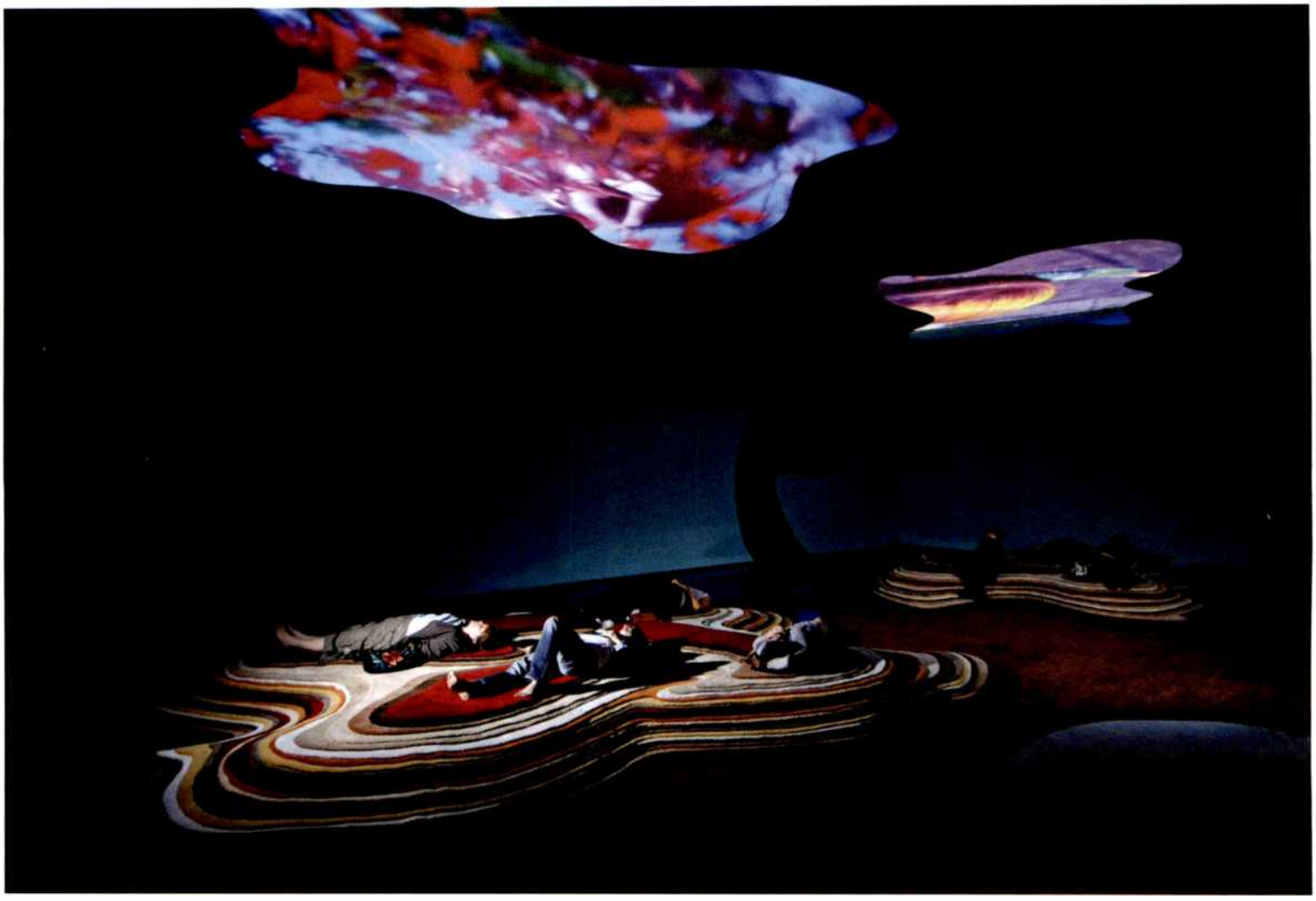
Video art and sound works are now widely accepted as legitimate artistic practice. Susan Philipsz, for example, uses her own voice to create sound installations and won last year's Turner Prize. But these methods challenged mainstream artistic forms when they emerged during the 1950s and 1960s, as artists explored the aesthetic possibilities offered by new broadcast, communication and electronic technologies in the postwar era.

In the 1990s, technological advances, particularly the development of the internet, created new environments where ideas could be exchanged and artwork shared.

Many international art institutions have been working hard to document and collect new-media art. The Guggenheim's Variable Media Initiative emerged from the organisation's efforts to preserve its collection of conceptual, minimalist and video art. The aim of this affiliation of museums, galleries and arts organisations is to build a network that will develop the tools, methods and standards needed to implement a preservation strategy for these types of works.

In the UK, Matters in Media Art is a multi-phase project designed to provide guidelines for the care of time-based media

© ESTATE OF NAM JUNE PAIK (TV CHAIR); © ESTATE OF NAM JUNE PAIK AND NORMAN BALLARD (LASER CONE, 2000/2010); PHOTO BY STEFAN ARENDT, LVR/MEDIENZENTRUM, DÜSSELDORF



works of art. The New Art Trust created the consortium in 2003 and it features curators, conservators, registrars and media technical managers from Tate, New York's Museum of Modern Art and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (SFMoMA).

Other UK centres of excellence include Gateshead's Baltic and the north-west England triumvirate of Fact in Liverpool, the Harris Museum & Art Gallery in Preston and Folly, a digital arts organisation based in Lancaster that works across the region.

Some feel that new-media art is still underrepresented in museum collections and mainstream curatorial practice. There are various reasons for this, including the ephemeral nature of some work and the rapid obsolescence of hardware and software.

"One of the issues around new media art is the perception that it's difficult to collect," says Alex Walker, head of arts and heritage at Preston City Council and the Harris. "Software can go out of date; things like cathode-ray tube TVs are impossible to get nowadays."

Cost is also a factor, as items such as projectors and high-end computers are expensive for museums and galleries to buy and maintain. Then there is the perception of digital art as lacking the validity and aesthetic merit of more traditional art forms. The participatory nature of some of this work can mean that it is difficult to recreate and display the work without losing some of the essence of its original meaning.

There are also conservation issues. "Televisions and other electronic equipment have a limited lifetime" explains Sook-Kyung Lee. "Repairing and conserving also becomes increasingly difficult as the knowledge and technical specialisms disappear over time."

Meanwhile, with modern internet art, often referred to as net.art, part of the challenge is that it lives a life outside of the gallery walls, on smartphones and laptops. This may contribute to the perception that it is not worth exhibiting. The other problem is that when it is brought into the confines of an exhibition space, it can be mistaken for something else.

"One of the key problems is the confusion between educational technology and art," explains Beryl Graham, an academic at the University of Sunderland, and co-editor of Crumb, a resource that aims to help artists and curators exhibit new media work. "For many years, galleries have adopted computers for the purpose of education, so it is very important to label it art."

Graham says some net artists don't want their work on display in a museum context at

Sharing the knowledge

www.variablemedia.net
A network of organisations led by the Guggenheim that is developing tools, methods and standards to preserve the work of artists working in ephemeral media.

http://current-experiment.org.uk
Digital debate, with the Harris Museum & Art Gallery and Folly at the helm.

www.rhizome.org
Rhizome is dedicated to the creation, presentation, preservation and critique of emerging artistic practices that engage technology. Affiliated to New York's New Museum.

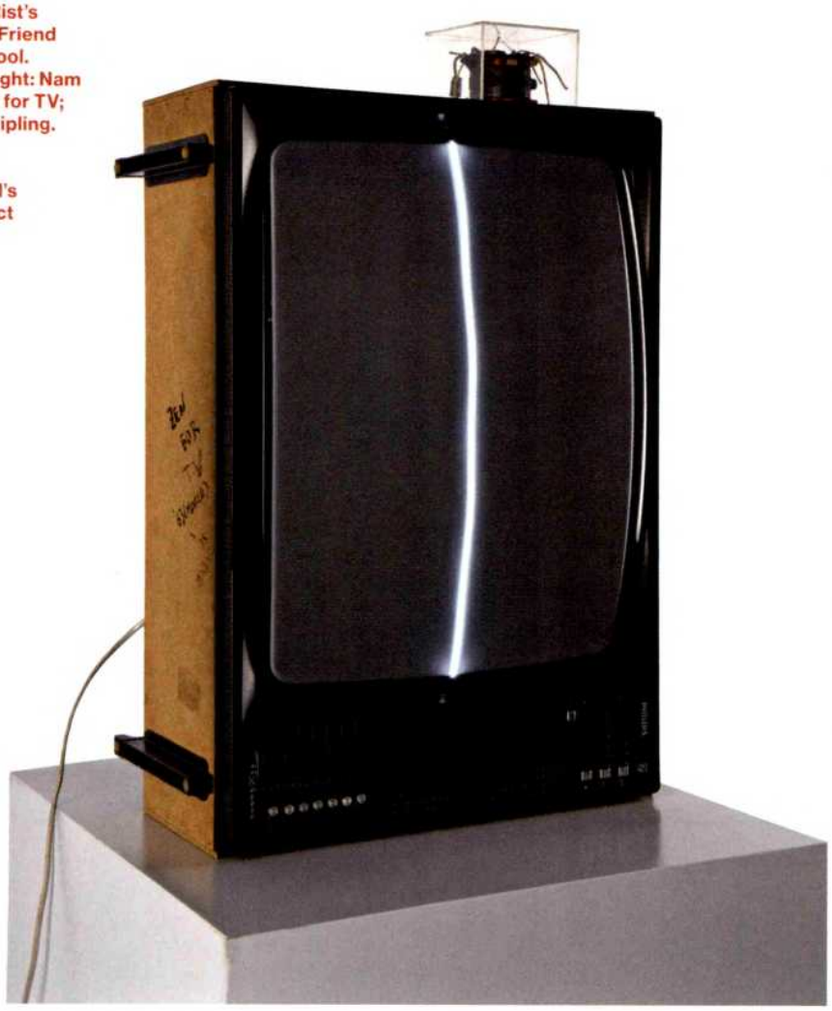
www.tate.org.uk/research/tateresearch/majorprojects/mediamatters
A project to provide guidelines for the care of time-based media works of art.

http://cool.conservation-us.org/coolaic/sg/emg/index.html
A group of conservators within the American Institute for Conservation with interests in electronic media. Serves as a networking organisation and holds workshops and panel discussions on media preservation issues.

www.crumbweb.org
Crumb helps those who exhibit new-media art, including curators, technicians and artists.

www.folly.co.uk
A digital arts organisation working across England's north west.

Left: Pipilotti Rist's Gravity Be My Friend at Fact, Liverpool. Right and far right: Nam June Paik, Zen for TV; and Bye, Bye Kipling. Right below: Apichatpong Weerasethakul's Primitive at Fact



© ESTATE OF NAM JUNE PAIK (BYE BYE KIPLING, 1986). COURTESY ELECTRONIC ARTS INTERMIX, NEW YORK. PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRIAN SLATER (RIST, 2007/08, WEERASETHAKUL, 2009)

all. "It depends on the artist – some think it's ok to have their work on a computer in a gallery, some don't. There is a need to discuss with the artist how they want their work shown."

Some museums and galleries, such as Fact, display and archive net.art on their websites. Fact's CEO Mike Stubbs says there are issues relating to making sure links on sites are updated and dealing with changing software requirements. "It raises a debate as to how sustainable it is, and where it sits, when the assets are digital themselves," he says.

Funding is also an issue. "These things are largely funded through short-term schemes, so that there are networks of net archives across Europe, but they're short-lived," says Stubbs. "These things are expensive to sustain, and not seen as a priority."

One attempt to pull together research and spread best practice is the Current project. Subtitled An Experiment in Collecting Digital Art, the scheme was initiated by the Harris, in association with Folly.

Current will begin with an exhibition of artists working in this area selected by a specialist panel, which will go on display at the Harris (25 March-4 June). This will be followed by a public debate in May to analyse the results, share findings, and set best practice guidelines on new-media art. The process culminates in a second panel of experts (including Tate director Caroline Collier, and Contemporary Arts Society director Paul Hobson) selecting a piece that will be added to the Harris's collection.

"There is an increasing trend for this art to migrate away from established institutions and gallery spaces, but it still needs to be collected, documented and recorded, even if it is outside that space," explains Walker at the Harris.

Walker believes strongly in the validity of this form of art, and sees the piece they intend to select as an important part of the Harris's programme of contemporary collecting.

"We're not going to collect new-media work because of the novelty of the process, or the machinery," Walker says. "The content of the work, and the connections it might make to our collection, or the meanings within that work are the ultimate goal."

Abbas Ali is a freelance journalist

A Museums Association one-day conference on creating effective digital content is taking place on 15 March in London. More details at: www.museumsassociation.org/events

The challenge to keep new-media art switched on

Tate created its time-based media conservation unit in 1996 and the section now has eight specialist conservators and technicians who are responsible for the needs of works incorporating film, video, sound, slide, audio, computer and performance elements.

We continue to grapple with the dual pressures of the obsolescence of older technologies, such as 35mm slides and cathode ray tube monitors, and the challenges presented by newer media such as software-based art.

The fast-moving nature of time-based media conservation makes it one of the most exciting areas of emerging conservation practice. These media are at the heart of some of the most important artworks of the past 50 years, and represent a significant part of all major contemporary art collections.

The international museum community is actively engaged in developing a conceptual framework within which it can respond to the conservation of these works, and is providing solutions to the practical challenges of developing the tools and knowledge needed.

In 2003 the New Art Trust created Matters In Media Art, an interdisciplinary consortium of museum professionals from within Tate, MoMA and SFMoMA. The aim was to share emerging practice through the publication of practical information on topics relating to time-based media art.

It is one of a number of international initiatives that are addressing issues related to the care and management of time-based media works of art.

Pip Laurenson is the head of collection care research at Tate

Liz Weston at a glance

Liz Weston's first job was as an aquarium keeper at the Horniman Museum in south London. She moved to the Science Museum, London, in 1985 as a curator.

After two years at the Science Museum, Weston became the curator of Mansfield Museum. At Mansfield she has developed the arcade extension, new stores, education room and, most recently, the XplorActive gallery in 2004.

She is secretary of the Group of Small Local Authority Museums.

Weston was born in 1962 in Bromley, Kent.

Weston front

Mansfield Museum curator Liz Weston tells *Simon Stephens* how changes to Renaissance and local authority cuts are affecting smaller museums around the UK. Photographs by *Phil Sayer*

One of the things that strikes you talking to Liz Weston about her work at Mansfield Museum is the number of small pots of Renaissance in the Regions money she has accessed, something that is true for many small local authority museums in England.

The Renaissance grants her museum has received are not particularly large, often a few thousand pounds, but have allowed the museum to greatly expand what it offers the public. The grants fund everything from digitisation and online activity to outreach and staffing. This is why Weston, who has been the curator at Mansfield for 24 years, is keen to find out how the new Renaissance arrangements will affect the funding her museum is able to access. These changes to the Renaissance structure combined with forthcoming cuts in local authority spending are making it an unsettling time.

"We all know that councils have to make cuts," says Weston. "We don't live in a little protected land where we can all be alright; we are going to have to take a hit. But what worries me is that when they close places they will never reopen them. Even in the years of plenty that might be to come they are not going to say 'let's open a museum'."

Weston says she has been having a few depressing conversations with some of her colleagues in the Group of Small Local Authority Museums (Goslam), which was originally set up by organisations wanting a bigger say in the development of the Renaissance programme. As well as Mansfield, Goslam members comprise museums in Erewash, Chesterfield, Northampton, Newark, Bassetlaw, Kettering and Buxton as well as the DH Lawrence Birthplace Museum in Eastwood, Ayscoughfee Hall Museum in Spalding and Rutland County Museum. ▶

The glass-roofed arcade area introduces visitors to the museum and Mansfield's history

It's a mixed picture for Goslam members: some are fighting closure, others are not doing too badly. Weston says Mansfield is not threatened with being closed down and the council is supportive.

"We have been asked to look for savings, as has every service within the council. All we know is that they are very positive about cultural services in Mansfield. There will be cuts, but hopefully not too drastic."

So how has Weston been preparing for the forthcoming cuts? One way is to charge for services rather than axe them, which is what is happening with the education sessions, which will cost £30 a class from the summer.

There has also been some capacity created by Renaissance money, such as a grant for web training. This allows staff to do work themselves, rather than pay consultants.

As well as the training, Renaissance money for digital work has been used to create a film that documents the closure of a local factory that makes metal boxes and tins. The manufacturer has relocated elsewhere in the town rather than closing down altogether and the film, which can be seen on YouTube, will form part of an exhibition on the history of the factory that will open later this year.

The museum has also used Renaissance cash to create a community website, Our Mansfield and Area, which features images from the collection and allows members of the public to upload information.

Renaissance money has funded outreach work that has led to displays in the museum, such as the recent Museums of the Mind exhibition. The project is one of five in the East Midlands exploring the benefits that cultural spaces offer adults experiencing mental health challenges.

One way to deal with the cuts is to try pooling resources with other organisations. Weston has had conversations about sharing staff, but nothing has happened yet. Generic activities such as marketing could also be shared, although Mansfield already has a number of low-cost ways of creating publicity material.

The region's network of museum development officers (MDOs) are already an important source of help and advice and Weston is keen for the existing structure to continue. At present, each county in the East Midlands has an MDO, which she says works well.

"The MDOs have been brilliant," Weston says. "They have a good knowledge of what's happening on the ground. If a grant comes up they will know who will benefit from it, who could do it and they will chase it up."

Mansfield Museum is also supported by a small number of volunteers, although Weston is sceptical whether the organisation could take on many more. "All this idea of having loads of volunteers is great, but you need to manage them and it takes a lot of time and space," she says.

> 'It is important for people to see what is happening in normal museums'

She would like to do more, but limited resources mean it is difficult to offer volunteers something meaningful to do. "I know it's not quite the vision of the big society that we are all meant to be working towards, but I'm not sure David Cameron has ever had a load of volunteers to manage, then he'd know wouldn't he?"

Weston is not overly pessimistic about the forthcoming budget cuts,

The Ceramics Gallery displays the Rachel Manners Collection of lusterware

and it's not all doom and gloom. She says temporary exhibitions, large and small, are an important way to attract people into the museum and these will continue. The big summer exhibition will be based around food, while a bought-in dinosaur exhibition opens on 12 February.

The last big capital project was the XplorActive gallery in 2004, which received a £211,500 grant from Heritage Lottery Fund. Weston says the scheme, which aimed to make the museum more child-friendly, had a significant impact but this is beginning to wear off. So she has started thinking about redeveloping another area of the museum, the arcade space, which is what visitors see on arrival.

Whether it's funding, training or outreach work, Weston gets lots of support and advice from local and regional sources. Despite this, she is keen for larger national bodies to acknowledge the work that goes on in smaller local authority museums.

"It's important that people from organisations in London see what is happening in normal museums," she says. "They might know what is happening in Tyne and Wear and Manchester but there is a heck of a lot of us who are slogging our guts out in small museums and doing some bloody good work, and it is equally important."

Some of this good work could be threatened by the new arrangements for Renaissance, under which the core museums will receive funding but will have no responsibility to the rest of their region. For museums such as Mansfield's, this will mean applying to the new Challenge Fund for resources after 2011-12, which is a transitional year as the hub system is phased out.

A new structure for Renaissance combined with council cuts are going to make the next few years challenging for Weston and many like her working in small local authority museums. But after nearly 25 years in her job she has seen many changes and this is just the latest challenge that has come her way.

Mansfield Museum at a glance

Mansfield Museum opened in 1904, a year after William Edward Baily, a local collector and natural historian, offered his collection and a building to the Nottinghamshire town.

Other collections were later donated by naturalist Joseph Whitaker and artist Albert Sorby Buxton. This meant the museum needed more space, so in 1938 it moved to the building it occupies today.

A fourth gallery was added in the mid-1960s.

The arcade extension opened after Liz Weston joined the museum in 1987. The last major capital project was the XplorActive environmental gallery in 2004, which received a £211,500 Heritage Lottery Fund grant.

The museum is now focused on working with groups across the community, from local schools to cub troops, as well as reminiscence groups, artists' societies, archaeological associations and others.

The museum is funded by Mansfield District Council and employs nine staff (6.3 full-time equivalents). The current budget for 2011-12 from the council is £250,690, without capital financing and support services costs. This is likely to be reduced by about 10%.

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The Museum of... Our pick of the UK's specialist collections

Floods, fertility and things to put under your pillow at night: *Louise Gray* hears about Cornwall's Museum of Witchcraft

Where The Museum of Witchcraft is located in the village of Boscastle on the rugged Atlantic coast of North Cornwall. It is open from 1 April until Halloween every year.

What "We are what it says on the tin," says Graham King, who took over as director and curator in 1996 at midnight on Halloween. Before he joined, King was a camera manufacturer for the National Archives with a layman's interest in folklore. The museum is in an old fisheries building on the harbour.

Opened Cecil Williamson first put the collection on display in 1951 on the Isle of Man, and titled it as a "Folklore Centre". "People had some problems with the w-word," says King. The collection moved to Boscastle in 1961 and took its current name.

Collection With scold's bridles, a large library and artefacts such as herbs and poppet dolls fashioned in the likenesses of people, the museum houses "the world's largest collection of artefacts connected with witchcraft, folklore and magic", says King. Displays look at images of witchcraft, persecution, goddess worship and the links between magic and religion. "We have some wax limbs typical of the type that are placed in Catholic churches around the world. Catholic visitors to the museum have been very interested," King says. One artefact at the museum is a stone, known "for reasons, you might imagine, as the 'cock rock'", he says. "It was donated to us by a lovely old Devon lady. She told us that you were meant to put it under your pillow at night to encourage fertility."

Highlights King says the collection has a strong bias towards folk magic and the magic practised by wise women and cunning folk, but it also has displays covering a wide range of magical subjects. "One display shows how the image of the witch has been used in a surprising number of advertising campaigns, including one for women's underwear in the 1920s," King says. He also mentions the Dutch Richel collection, "a huge collection of drawings, paintings and works related to ritual and magic".

Help at hand The museum is run by King, with an assistant and a historian. There is a lot of help from volunteers and students. The museum has some 220 Friends.

Budget A lot of the museum's income is generated from its admission fee (£4). "We're proud that the museum has now run for 60 years without any grants. We are one of the few completely independent museums in the country that is commercially successful."

Sticky moment In 2004 the museum was at the centre of a national emergency – the Boscastle floods in which buildings were washed away and more than 100 cars were swept out to sea by a torrent that rushed through the village. King, who is also a coastguard, raised the alarm that started the rescue operation. The museum's ground floor was covered with tons of sewage-infested mud and the weight of the water caused most of its internal walls to collapse. The museum also has a problem with "nasty mail" from people who disapprove of witchcraft.

Survival tip "Do not operate a museum in a steep-sided valley by a river," says King. He also stresses the importance of running your museum as a business.

Visitors 30,000 in 2010.

Future plans "We fight a constant battle against humidity and are trying to find some better dehumidifiers," King says. The museum and its volunteers also continue the "never-ending process of scanning archive documents to keep the online catalogue as up to date as possible". The museum's website is a popular resource and the staff are proud that much of its material is fully catalogued and online.

www.museumofwitchcraft.com

© JOHN HOOPER/HOOPA ART

Above: a carved wooden wand with a phallic handle from the Richel collection.
Below: inside the Museum of Witchcraft.
Left: a seahorse good luck charm

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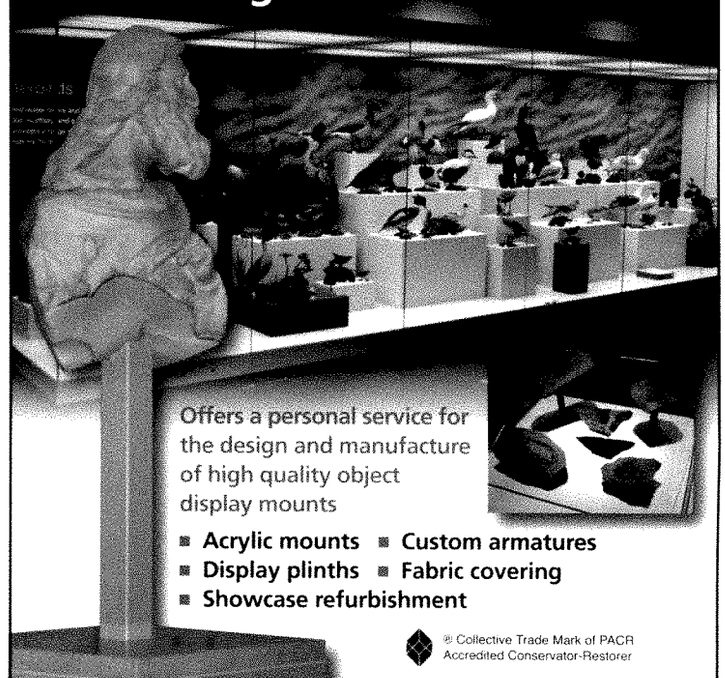

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MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

Firing Line: Cardiff Castle Museum of the Welsh Soldier, Cardiff, p52

Roman Baths, Bath, p50

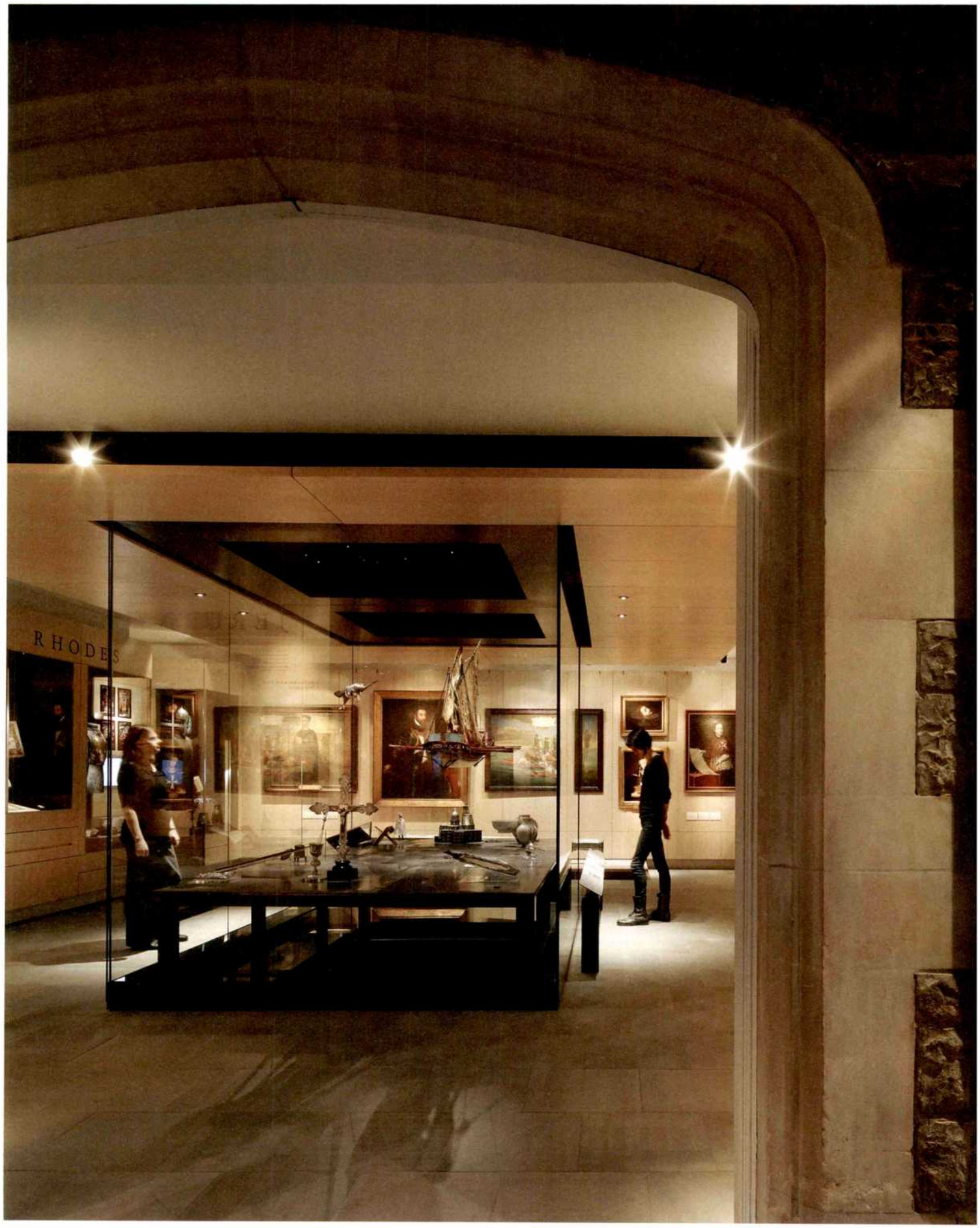
Reviews

"Walking around the galleries, it is clear that the politics and history of the Order are not only hard to grasp, but harder to come to terms with" *Sara Selwood* on the Museum of the Order of St John, London

Museum of the Order of St John, London, p44

Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead, British Museum, London, p48

METAPHOR (ST JOHN) OPENING OF THE MOUTH RITUAL. COPYRIGHT THE TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM (BOOK OF THE DEAD) FURNEAUX STEWART (FIRING LINE) BATH & NE SOMERSET COUNCIL (ROMAN BATHS)



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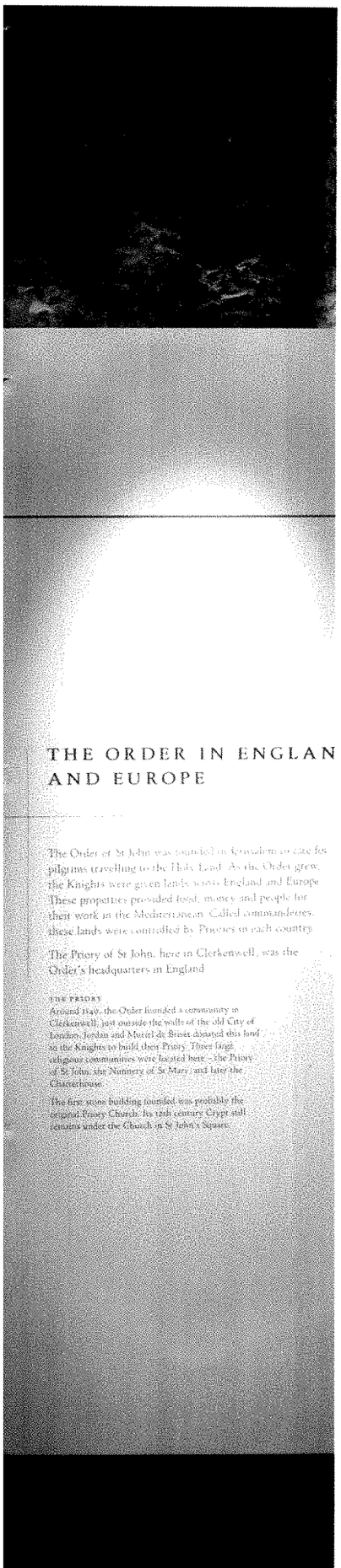

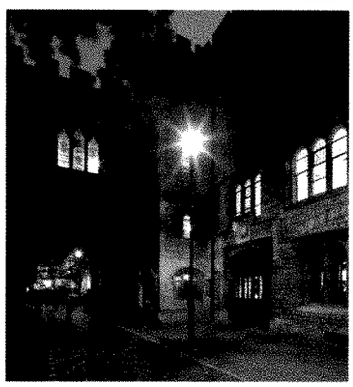

Left and top: the Museum of the Order of St John draws on a millennium of history. Above: St John's Gatehouse. The Order has its British base here

Museum of the Order of St John, London

It has ancient links and exquisite galleries, but this new museum is struggling with the complex story of the Order, writes *Sara Selwood*

I had imagined that the failure of the proposed Blue Light Museum, which was intended to display the historical collections of London's three emergency services (the Metropolitan Police, the London Fire Brigade and the London Ambulance Service), would create all the more attention for the Museum of the Order of St John, at St John's Gate, Clerkenwell, which has just reopened after a 14-month revamp. But, as it turns out, the history of the St John Ambulance Foundation, its first-aid training and emergency medical care, which only goes back to the 1880s, is the least of it.

The museum describes itself as one of the great hidden treasures of London. Despite capital funding of £1.5m from the Heritage Lottery Fund and money from other donors, it is still far from being conspicuous.

Visitors approach it through the unmarked medieval gatehouse of the former Priory of the Knights of St John. Once inside, you still get the impression that you're intruding. In a sense, you are.

The galleries are housed in what remains a working building used by the Order and the St John Ambulance. The feeling of intrusion is also partly to do with there being a fine line between museum volunteers belonging to an in-crowd and exuding an air of exclusivity. There is also the feeling that the Order doesn't appear to want too many visitors. It's closed on Sundays and Bank Holiday weekends – precisely the kind of times when you might want to go. Also, its capacity is fairly limited, and it only runs six guided tours a week. As I discovered, the tours are fairly crucial.

The galleries are small, but beautiful. No question about it: they're elegant, pristine and professional. They house the most important items in the collection – exquisite medieval treasures from the Middle East and Europe: paintings, illuminated manuscripts, armour, cannon, ancient coins, furniture, ceramics, silverware and textiles.

Thousand-year history

The displays are animated by a timeline, audiovisual displays and actor interventions. When I visited, the "Fortitude Under Fire" performance by a Voluntary Aid Detachment Nurse talking about courage and duty on the western front in the first world war, pretty much filled one of the three galleries, which we didn't have time to revisit.

But if you restrict your visit to the galleries, you'll be missing out on the main event. The three galleries simply can't cover the long and hugely complex story of the Order of St John.

The Order of the Hospital of St John of Jerusalem was ►

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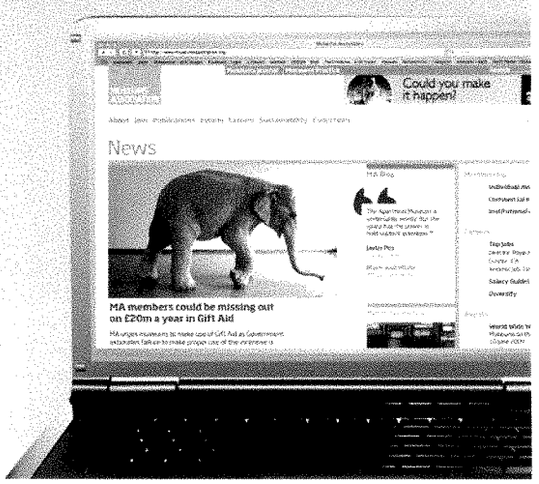
www.museumsassociation.org/mp



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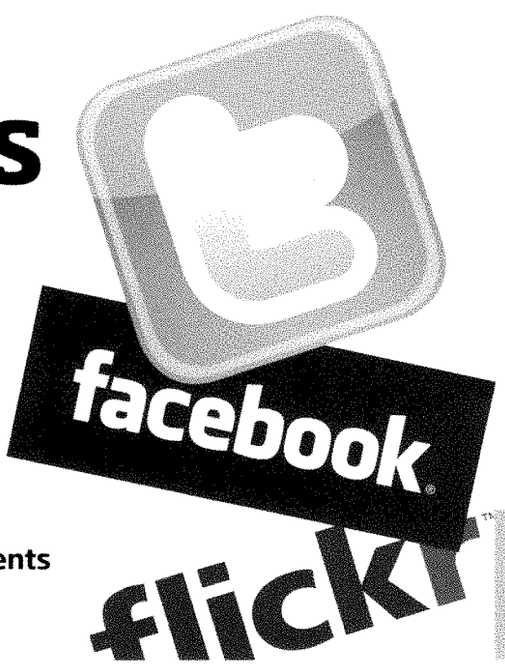

MA events

established in the 11th century, following the first crusade's capture of Jerusalem. The Order comprised a group of knights, drawn from noble European families, who took vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. They also assumed care of the sick, and established a hospital to care for pilgrims who had travelled to the Holy Land.

Sovereign entity

Clearly much of the Order's history was determined by its opposition. It was forced to be peripatetic – the precise reasons for that are unclear. In 1291, it was driven from Palestine, which had been recaptured by Muslim forces; it moved to Cyprus and then Rhodes, which it left in 1522, after the Ottoman sultan, Suleiman the Magnificent, conquered the island. It moved to Malta, until it was expelled by Napoleon in 1798. A suite of paintings testify to the Order's period during which – as the Knights of Malta – its ships patrolled the Mediterranean, guarding trade routes.

The vestige of the original Roman Catholic order – the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St John of Jerusalem, of Rhodes and of Malta – still has its headquarters in Rome. Its legacy is manifest in the fact that it describes itself as a sovereign entity, with diplomatic relations with 104 states, and is engaged in international charity work.

Walking around the galleries, it is clear that the politics and history of the Order are not only hard to grasp, but harder to come to terms with. The Order embraced the charitable care of the sick and wounded, without distinction of race, colour or creed, but it also fought the "infidel".

Despite being a holy order, faith, hope and charity transmuted into faith, charity and armed conflict. Offering care indiscriminately transformed into discrimination and racism. It must have been galling for the Hospitallers of St John, or Knights Hospitallers, to have had to rely on the superior skills of their enemies, the most advanced scientists of their time.

Unfortunately, the museum offers little in the way of social or political histories, and makes no attempt to reconcile the Order's past with the world that its visitors occupy. There's nothing more frustrating than knowing that you're not getting the full picture as you go around a museum. It means that the displays never quite fall into place. St John's clearly needs a historian to explain it.

The guided tour helped, although there was a lot of slack in its 90 minutes. It covered the chapter hall; the council chamber, where plaques commemorate royal patrons and notable members of the Order; and the museum's second site, the Priory church building. This is occupied by the church, crypt, learning centre, cloister and cloister garden. Just by crossing the road, you realise how the Priory once dominated the locality: St John's Lane, St John's Place, St John's Square and St John's Street.

The past dominated the guided tour, which focused on what the Order once was. The Priory was set up as the English headquarters of the Order in 1140s and overseen by a grand master. It was reputedly the third largest landowner in the country. But it was dissolved after Henry VIII split from the Catholic Church and stripped out its assets. The tour guide gave the impression that this still rankled.

First aid and ambulances

Following the reformation, the Order's Clerkenwell premises had a number of different uses in the subsequent centuries. During the 16th century they housed the offices of the master of the revels. Many of Shakespeare's plays received their licences here; the playwright himself must have visited on many occasions.

In the 18th century, the gate had a brief incarnation as a coffee house run by William Hogarth's father. Dr Johnson had his first London job at St John's Gate, writing for the Gentlemen's Magazine. Later, as the Old Jerusalem Tavern, it was the meeting place for artists and writers, including Charles Dickens. This was where the modern Order of St John in England was born. Promoting public first aid and ambulance transport services in the newly industrialised England and across its empire, it was granted a Royal Charter in 1888.

Today, the Order of St John is active in over 40 countries across the world. It trains people in first aid; helps accident victims in industrial workplaces; and supports pubic events. Until the mid-20th century, it was the only ambulance service in existence. Today, its principal charitable foundations are the St John Ambulance and the St John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Foundation.

Although visitors will be most familiar with the modern St John, it has relatively little visibility in the museum. Its main emphasis on the history of the Order is reminiscent of the Knights Templars, who were also founded to protect Christian pilgrims journeying to Jerusalem, and whose Temple church, is close to St John's. Visitors to the museum should expect an experience that is more Da Vinci Code than Blue Light.

Sara Selwood is an independent museum consultant

Above: the Museum of the Order of St John has artefacts that date back to the Order's foundation. Below: the St John Ambulance is the Order's most visible contemporary manifestation

Project data

Cost £3.7m
Main funders Heritage Lottery Fund £1.5m, Wellcome Trust, Wolfson Foundation, Garfield Weston Foundation
Exhibition design Metaphor
Construction Mivan
Project management Cultural Innovations
Architect DIA Associates

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Journey Through the Afterlife: Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead/ Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology

Simon Stephens on two museums with fantastic collections of material from ancient Egypt, but very different resources to present them

Journey Through the Afterlife: Ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead at the British Museum (BM) is a typical blockbuster exhibition in terms of its scale and ambition. It is backed by a strong marketing campaign and national media coverage. There are loans from museums overseas, although the vast majority of artefacts come from the BM's collection of 100,000 Egyptian items.

Ten minutes' walk from the BM, the Petrie Museum, which is part of University College London (UCL), holds another remarkable Egyptology collection. The Petrie has about 80,000 Egyptian objects, but the museum operates in a very different financial environment. It recently revamped its galleries, but did so on a limited budget. Whereas the Book of the Dead is sponsored by energy giant BP, the new graphics panels at the Petrie are funded by the museum's Friends.

The Book of the Dead is being held in the Reading Room, which the BM is using to stage temporary exhibitions until its £135m World Conservation and Exhibitions Centre is completed in 2013.

The Petrie was hoping to have moved to a new home at UCL last year, which would also have included a temporary exhibition space, lecture facilities and a reading room. But a major partner pulled out in 2009 and the plan was abandoned.

The Petrie is still hoping to move as it is in a cramped space that is up a staircase on a hard-to-find street. It is waiting for the UCL masterplan to progress but, until a new home is found, it is making the best of what it's got.

Above: ancient Egyptian bells at the Petrie Museum, London.
Left: a new space for study, events and talks at the Petrie

© PETRIE MUSEUM (BELLS PANEL) © TRUSTEES OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM (ALL BM IMAGES)

Detail in small things

While there's a headlong rush to secure tickets for the Book of the Dead at the British Museum, the Petrie has a new banner outside that simply says: "We are open to the public." The museum has also introduced new signage on the staircase leading to the entrance. These give visitors a flavour of what to expect inside.

Previously, visitors had to go through a storage area to enter the galleries, but this space has now been converted to give a more welcoming impression. Graphic panels introduce the museum's founders: Amelia Edwards, whose bequest supported the museum and UCL's department of Egyptian archaeology and philology, which were both created in 1892; and William Flinders Petrie, who sold his large collection of Egyptian antiquities to UCL. But the museum also introduces other people to visitors: the Egyptians who worked with Petrie and made his excavations possible.

Inside the main galleries the museum has retained its style of visible storage displays. The objects don't have individual labels, although there is basic information such as their museum number.

But as part of the revamp the museum has introduced 78 interpretation panels that explain what the groups of objects are, where they are from and why they are important. Unlike the BM, which has lots of large Egyptology objects, the Petrie's collection often highlights small everyday artefacts such as combs, hair curlers and shaving razors.

The dense visible storage style remains, but the museum has moved some display cases to create a more open feel. A new space has been provided for study, talks and events.

Like many museums with limited resources, the Petrie is also turning to digital technology

Above: King Herihor and Queen Nodjmet from the Book of the Dead papyrus of Nodjmet, at the British Museum's Journey Through the Afterlife.
Below: the coffin of Horaawesheb with a female mummy.
Right: the complete 37-metre Greenfield Papyrus on display for the first time

to makes its collections more accessible. All 80,000 objects are available online in 2D and the museum is working on creating 3D digital images. And visitors can now use 3D image kiosks at the museum to virtually pick up objects and rotate them to see them from different angles.

Atmospheric journey

The Book of the Dead at the BM uses the museum's collection of Book of the Dead papyri to explore ancient Egyptian beliefs about the afterlife. The book is not a single text, but a compilation of spells to help the dead safely navigate the netherworld.

The papyri are fragile and light-sensitive but, as has been done before, the exhibition designers have turned this to their advantage by using low-light levels to take visitors on an atmospheric journey through the afterlife.

The exhibition is divided into 11 sections, starting with an introduction and ending with a display of the longest Book of the Dead in the world, the 37 metre-long Greenfield Papyrus, shown in public in its entirety for the first time.

The exhibition itself is a long one and a bit one-paced at times, but it does provide some fascinating insights into the complex belief systems of ancient Egyptians. The objects are beautifully presented and the accompanying interpretation is well written and clear, as you would expect from the BM.

The quotes from some of the spells are great and it would have been good to see more of these rich texts. A favourite of mine was: "O Rerek-snake, take yourself off, Geb and Shu have arisen against you, for you have eaten a mouse, which Ra detests and you have chewed the bones of a putrid cat."

With quotes such as this to play with, at times I felt the exhibition underplayed the drama. But overall, visitors seemed to be getting a lot out of the experience. There is plenty of supporting material for family groups and schools, both online and at the museum. There are also two multimedia guides, one for adults, and another for kids.

Despite the gap in resources between the BM and the Petrie, both are attempting to find ways of shedding light on a civilisation that is familiar but at the same time very alien. As Stephen Quirke, a curator at the Petrie, says, it is about "rehumanising the past". Hopefully the Petrie will find a new home that will allow more people to see it do this.

Project data

Book of the Dead, British Museum, London

Cost £1m
Sponsor BP
Curator John Taylor
Exhibition design Land Design Studio
Graphics BM
Project management BM
Digital media design and production Clay
Design media installation Sysco
Lighting design DHA Design
Interactives MER Services
Graphic production BAF Graphics
Display cases Glasbau Hahn, Manfred Frank
Quantity surveyor Greenway Associates
Transportation Constantine
Exhibition ends 6 March

Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology

Cost £62,000
Main funders Friends of the Petrie Museum, UCL
Curators Debbie Challis, Stephen Quirke
Design Lucienne Roberts
Project management Tonya Nelson, museum manager

Roman Baths, Bath

A five-year redevelopment of the Roman Baths is bringing in more visitors, but needs to do more to help them interact with each other, argues *Nicky Ryan*

In December 2010, as freezing conditions gripped the UK, images of bikini-clad women relaxing in a naturally heated rooftop pool, juxtaposed against the snowy city of Bath, circulated throughout the world's media.

The subject of the news item was Britain's only thermal spring, worshipped and tamed by the Romans and the site of the Roman Baths and Temple complex at Aquae Sulis. A Unesco World Heritage Site, Bath is one of Britain's major tourist destinations, with the Roman Baths listed by the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions in the top 20 UK visitor attractions. An economic impact survey conducted by Peter Dawson of the University of Bath estimated that the Roman Baths, managed by Bath & North East Somerset Council, leverages £92m a year into the local economy.

Last year saw the culmination of a £5.5m redevelopment of the Roman Baths that has taken five years. The aim was to transform access to the visitor attraction and to maintain its position within the competitive local tourist industry. The focus was on conservation, access and interpretation through the creation of a family friendly, interactive experience that highlights the aesthetic appeal of the site as well as emphasising its human dimension.

The refurbishment of the Roman Baths was part of the council's broader strategy to refresh the city's tourist attractions and facilities and make them appealing to new audiences. A Destination Management Plan of 2007 stated: "Bath is a theatre which needs to stage new plays, a gallery which needs to rehang its collection from time to time."

The document emphasised the need to respond to changing consumer tastes by bringing experiences centre stage through innovation in interpretation, presentation and technology. In The Experience Economy, authors Joseph Pine and James Gilmore argue that by capitalising on the consumer demand for

experiences, businesses can increase profitability and build the foundation for future economic growth. At the Roman Baths, the staging and consumption of experiences is central to its updated design and interpretation.

The council's Heritage Services Team worked with Event Communications and Scena Productions to bring history to life through the stories of the people who visited the baths and temple in Roman times. "Character stations", comprising computer animations and film projections of Roman individuals, such as Sulinus, a stonemason, supported by the objects of his trade, punctuate the sequence of displays.

Deep Bath

Visitors are encouraged to "Experience the Great Bath – walk where the Romans once walked" while costumed characters engage in activities and demonstrations and provide tourist photo opportunities. Costumed interpretation also takes place within the new amphitheatre-style space that houses the temple pediment. A combination of high and low-tech interpretation, such as digital reconstructions and 3D models, are also used.

Other changes include a reversal of visitor flow in order to make the complex space hidden beneath the centre of Bath more comprehensible. Lifts to transport visitors with mobility difficulties from street to Roman level have been incorporated along with new walkways, ramps and lighting.

Stonework has been cleaned and stabilised and key features of the site, such as the Great Bath, decluttered. Walkways have been made less obtrusive so that more of the Roman remains can be viewed by the public and the insertion of glass panels into the floor at strategic points enables Roman engineering to be inspected in close detail.

The two on-site shops have also been updated and redesigned by London-based retail consultancy M Worldwide. The selling area has been expanded by 15%.

The location of the main store at the end of the route through the baths and with a second exit onto the High Street is significant in that it provides the culmination of the visitor experience at the same time as competing with local stores to attract passing shoppers. The interior scheme combines the same textures, materials, colours and lighting used throughout the attraction so that the shop provides a seamless part of the overall experience.

To date, the Roman Baths Development Plan appears to have achieved its objectives of increasing visitor numbers and boosting revenue. The improved decoration and interpretation has been imaginatively executed and the impact of key moments in the visit maximised, as in the case of the impressive new space showcasing the temple pediment.

Passive participation

However, at the heart of this experiential redesign lies a paradox. For all the exciting opportunities to connect with audiences though interactive displays and costumed interpretation, audiences are failing to connect with each other. During my visit to the baths, which was on a busy bank holiday, it was quiet and there was a sense of physical isolation and passive participation.

This could be attributed to the widespread use of audio-guides, which continue to offer the main source of information about the Roman Baths to visitors. Updated into eight different languages and integrated with other media used in the displays, the guides provide visitors with useful information and increase dwell time, but appear to inhibit discussion and shared experience.

The lack of social interaction is at odds with the noisy and lively way in which the baths would have been experienced in Roman times. As Seneca the Younger commented in 60AD: "Picture me with a babble of noise going on all about me at a public bath-house."

Nicky Ryan is the programme director at the London College of Communication, University of the Arts, London

Project data

Cost £5.5m
Main funders Bath & North East Somerset Council, DCMS/Wolfson Fund, MLA Designation Challenge Fund
Exhibition design Event Communications
Project management in house
Construction Scena Productions
Shop design M Worldwide Design
Shopfitting Datum Contracts, IDEss Retail
Conservation Cliveden Conservation, Minerva Conservation, National Conservation Centre, Liverpool
Structural design Mann Williams
BSL tour Acoustiguide

Left: the Great Bath. Its thermal waters have been popular for 2,000 years.
Above: a Roman tombstone showing a dog bringing down a deer, which was found nearby the Bath site.
Right: a model of the baths, spring and temple as they would have appeared in the 4th century

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Firing Line: Cardiff Castle Museum of the Welsh Soldier, Cardiff

Julia Edge puts herself in the firing line to discover how a museum in Cardiff is telling the story of two Welsh regiments

Above: a Firing Line visitor tries a Brown Bess musket for weight. Other images: timelines, equipment displays and iconic events such as the battle of Waterloo

Cardiff Castle is the perfect setting for a museum telling the story of the Welsh soldier. Dovetailing neatly with the castle's own story of warfare and defence, Firing Line: Cardiff Castle Museum of the Welsh Soldier, tells the history of two regiments, the Royal Welsh and 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards. It covers more than 300 years of military history and includes many famous campaigns.

The history of these two regiments (one infantry, the other cavalry) is complex, with various regiments merging along the way, but the museum's introductory board explains this clearly by using timelines. Similar timelines appear throughout the museum in the introduction to each section. These also include other non-military historical events, such as Newton publishing his work on gravity in 1687, which help to root the military events firmly within popular history. It also makes the military history more palatable to the non-expert.

Also in the museum's introductory area is an interactive table entitled "Where in the world?", which has a map of the world and a series of questions such as: "Our cavalry once captured an elephant in battle. Where?" The button next to this question lights up the answer and also points to the place on the world map.

This interactive is useful in showing the global nature of the Welsh regiments' work and also in introducing the six main display sections. As visitors enter and exit through the same door, this table is also useful as revision, or simply a fun way to check what you have learned before you leave.

Orientation in the gallery is clear, with sections arranged chronologically. When I was there, a guide was greeting visitors and advising them on the best route through the gallery.

Specialist terminology

The text was mostly clear and easy to read, apart from the numbers next to items in the display cases. These are colour coded (a dark green background for the Welsh infantry, dark blue for the cavalry), but the lighting meant that in many of the cases, these two backgrounds looked the same.

The story that the museum is trying to tell is fairly complex with many facts and (to most visitors) unfamiliar regimental names and military terms. On the whole, the museum deals with this well by including layman's terms where possible. When talking about a battle where the king's colours were captured, there is an explanation of what this is ("a distinctive regimental flag"). There is also a useful glossary board near the start of the exhibition entitled "1st things 1st", which explains military terms used in the text such as regiment, battalion, terrain, etc.

Sometimes, however, the museum's curators assume that the visitor has more substantial background knowledge. In the section on the battle of Waterloo, the facts of the battle are not immediately obvious. Visitors have to search for them in the general body of the text. It would have been useful to have had some clearer background information here. I found myself wondering where the battle had taken place (where exactly is Waterloo?) and how many soldiers had fought in it.

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Overall, the museum succeeds in keeping visitors' attention, partly by using layers of interpretation. I enjoyed the "Did you know?" and "It's a fact" sections highlighted in red boxes and in red text. These showed interesting and memorable facts in bite-size chunks.

The medals case was also a particular success. They are in a large case on the side wall and make a stunning display. Along the bottom of the medals there is good basic interpretation, including sections headed "What is a medal?" and "Clasps or Bars?". Mounted on the wall next to the case is all the detailed information about each individual medal (who was awarded it, when and why). Visitors can access whichever level of detail they are interested in.

The museum is also good at presenting information in different ways. There are some lift-the-flap sections, making the experience more interactive. In the "Distant Waters" section, flaps on an 18th-century ship are lifted to reveal typical orders that might be given to a marine: "Fix bayonets! We're going in! Form a boarding party. When the ship's touch, leap across!"

Firepower

In the second world war section, there is an interactive game, where visitors choose from four military tasks and "roll" dice fixed to the wall to choose which tanks and other vehicles to use. In the section on the battle of Waterloo, a Brown Bess musket is fixed to the display board to allow visitors to feel its weight. Next to it is a piece of metal with large holes in it, an illustration of the damage that the musket would do if fired.

Coming away from the museum, it is the information gleaned from these interactive experiences that we tend to remember for longer.

Children clearly enjoy all of these interactive elements, but particularly the section where they can try on uniforms, hats and equipment. The museum provides a spacious area to allow this and there are many items to try. I would have liked the uniforms to be labelled in some way indicating date and which bits of uniform and equipment would have been worn together.

Project data

Cost £1.1m
Main funders Royal Welsh, 1st The Queen's Dragoon Guards (£500,000 each), Cardiff Council
Design Furneaux Stewart
Project management ProjectSmart
Exhibition build Paragon Creative
Lighting design DHA Design
Audiovisuals Pollen Studio
Mount making Colin Lindley

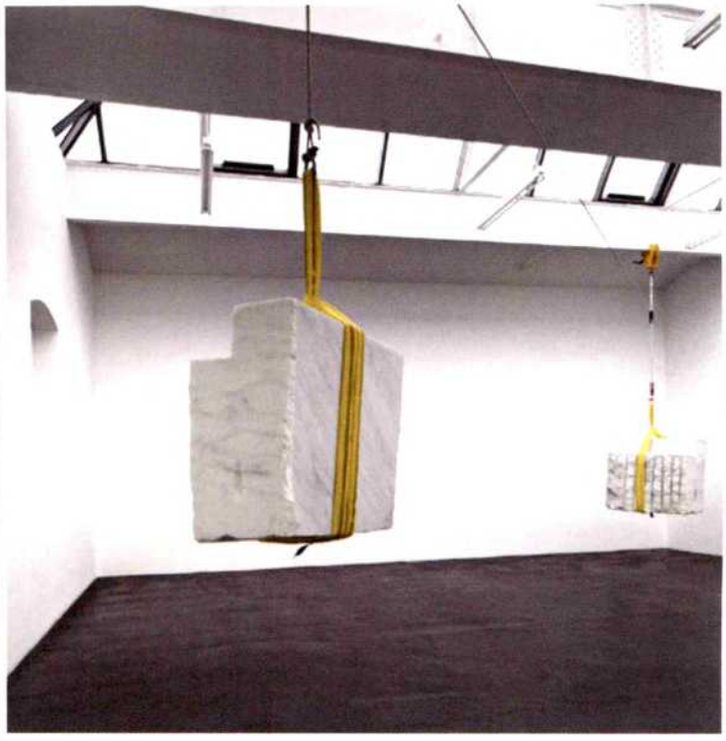
I enjoyed the museum, particularly the many personal stories. Sections entitled "Outstanding Courage" introducing individual soldiers and their personal and military histories are dotted throughout the displays. In the first world war section, we are shown the journal of a Welsh private, mounted book-like on hinged display panels.

However, I was disappointed that the museum did not include any audio accounts of soldiers' experiences, particularly from the more modern conflicts in which Welsh soldiers have fought, such in Afghanistan and Iraq. There was one video entitled "What is a regiment?" featuring modern Welsh soldiers, but this was more about the family feel of work in a regiment and did not include much of the raw personal experience I was looking for. This is one way in which the museum could develop in the future.

Julia Edge is a former collections manager at the Horniman Museum, London, and a volunteer at Storrington and District Museum, West Sussex

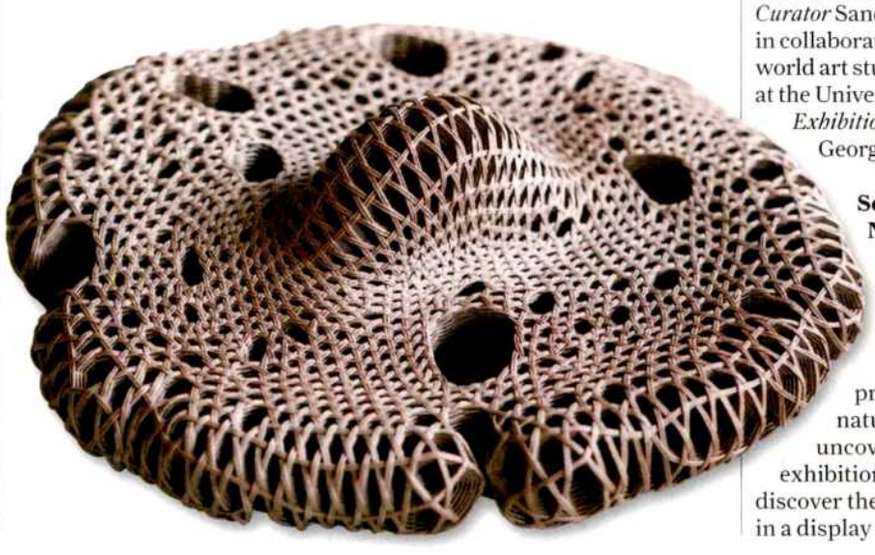
Opening this month

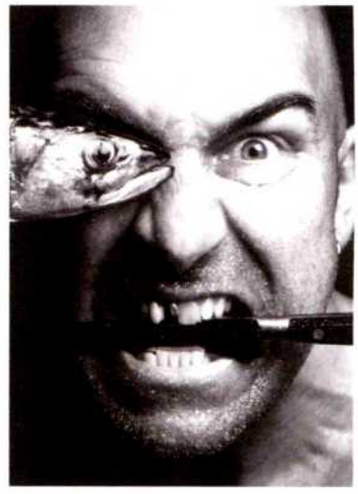
Old masters in Liverpool and newer ones in Falmouth: *Geraldine Kendall* selects the pick of February's new exhibitions



Simon Starling: Recent History, Tate St Ives, Cornwall
5 February-2 May
A showcase of works by Turner Prize-winning artist Simon Starling created in the last five years, including many previously unseen in the UK. It features video, film, slide projections, photography and sculpture, and includes Red Rivers and Long Ton, a sculpture featuring two suspended rough lumps of marble that have been precision-cut to have the same form. There is also a video work from 2008 that draws parallels between a 19th-century anthropological expedition to the Congo and Starling's own journey along the Hudson river in a handmade canoe. A site-specific installation has been commissioned as well. The show is a collaboration with the Contemporary Art Centre in Malaga.
Cost undisclosed
Main funders Tate Members, Tate St Ives Members, Simon Starling Exhibition Supporters Group, Henry Moore Foundation
Curator Martin Clark
Exhibition design in-house
Publicity Two Design

Basketry: Making Human Nature, Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, Norwich
8 February-22 May
An exhibition tracing the history of one of the earliest human technologies, basketry, from the ancient world to the present day. The show aims to explore the place of basketry in human society, economy and culture, using objects that demonstrate a broad range of weaving techniques and materials. It features practical objects such as reed boats, shields from North East Congo, fish traps from Ghana and Egyptian shoes, alongside contemporary sculpture and design pieces by artists such as Laura Ellen Bacon, Wilfried Popp and Lois Walpole.
Cost £200,000
Main funders Arts & Humanities Research Council through the Beyond Text programme
Curator Sandy Heslop. Developed in collaboration with the school of world art studies and museology at the University of East Anglia.
Exhibition design and graphics George Sexton Associates





Sexual Nature, Natural History Museum, London
11 February-2 October
The most bizarre and little-known secrets of procreation in the natural world are uncovered in this exhibition. Visitors can discover the science behind sex in a display of more than 100 animal specimens from the museum collection, such as Guy, a large male gorilla donated by London Zoo, as well as BBC footage of wildlife engaging in outlandish mating rituals. Live creatures will also appear, including a tank of stick insects that stay attached for several months after mating. Surprising facts, such as the barnacle's ability to extend its penis to 30 times its own body length, are recounted as part of the exploration of diverse seduction and reproduction practices in the animal kingdom.
Cost about £400,000
Main funders in-house
Curated by interpretation team with input from museum scientists and experts with

© NOBUE HATEYAMA 2011 (BASKET) © FALMOUTH ART GALLERY COLLECTION (TANNER) © SIMON STARLING AND THE MODERN INSTITUTE, GLASGOW (LONG TON). ABERDEEN ART GALLERY AND MUSEUMS COLLECTION (LIGHTHOUSE)

specialisms in animal and human sexual behaviour.
Exhibition design and graphics Easy Tiger Creative

Masters of Photography, Falmouth Art Gallery, Falmouth
12 February-2 April
The work of influential photographers such as Eve Arnold, Jane Bown, Fay Godwin, Lee Miller and Man Ray feature in this exhibition. Many of the photographs have a connection to Cornwall, including those taken by a group of surrealists during a visit in 1937. The exhibition will particularly focus on the work of photographer Ian Stern, who joined the BBC aged 19 and worked for several years on the Man Alive documentaries, which covered social and political issues. Also known by his pseudonym Robert Ribeck, Stern died in 1978 aged 31, but is considered to have made a vital contribution to the art of documentary photography. Falmouth Art Gallery director Brian Stewart planned and organised much of the exhibition before his death in December (see obituary, p59).
Cost £1,200
Main funders Heritage Lottery Fund and University College Falmouth, incorporating Dartington College
Curators Natalie Rigby, Donna Williams, Glen Freestone and Alex Hooper
Exhibition design and graphics Steve Collinson, Xgraphica

Top left: Aberdeen Lighthouse, a welcome seamark for sailors, is part of a new exhibition at the city's Maritime Museum.
Above: the Natural History Museum, London, exposes the secrets of Indian peafowls and other creatures.
Above left: El Greco and Studio's Coronation of the Virgin joins other works from the Schorr Collection at the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.
Below: Peter Marshall's street scene at the Museum of London

Opposite page: Simon Starling's Long Ton, dangling now at Tate St Ives.
Opposite middle: Steve Tanner's portrait of theatre director Bill Mitchell.
Opposite left: Norie Hatekayama's Energy Field Series is at the Sainsbury Centre's Basketry exhibition

A Collector's Eye: Cranach to Pissarro, Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool
18 February-15 May
Collector David J Lewis has built up his extensive Schorr Collection of artworks over 35 years and is now showing some of his acquisitions in public. Covering the past five centuries, more than 60 works will be on display, from old master artists such as Rubens, El Greco, Delacroix and Cranach to impressionists including Pissarro and Sisley. The exhibition also traces how a collection develops and how the taste of the collector can change over time. Highlights include Rubens's Battle of the Amazons and Pissarro's Pommiers dans une prairie.
Cost unavailable
Main funders National Museums Liverpool with private donations
Curator Xanthe Brooke
Exhibition design and graphics in-house design team

London Street Photography, Museum of London, London
18 February-4 September
An exhibition showcasing the museum's diverse collection of London street photographs from 1860 to 2010. Demonstrating how street photography has evolved over the years, yet always retained the crucial element of spontaneity, the exhibition offers a visual record of an ever-changing city and its inhabitants. About 200 photographs will go on display, including work by well-known photographic pioneers such as John Thomson and Roger Mayne.
Cost £50,000
Funder Museum of London
Curators Mike Seaborne, Anna Sparham
Exhibition design Norton Allison

Seamarking, Aberdeen Maritime Museum, Aberdeen
19 February-11 June
Seamarks such as beacons, buoys and lighthouses guide vessels along maritime channels and enable them to safely avoid hazardous areas. Seamarking navigational systems are vital for the safety of mariners across the world, and the intriguing story of the technology's development is told in this joint collaboration between the Museum of Scottish Lighthouses, Fraserburgh, and the Aberdeen Maritime Museum.
Cost unavailable
Main funders Aberdeen Maritime Museum, Museum of Scottish Lighthouses
Curators Meredith Greiling, Virginia Mayes-Wright
Exhibition design and graphics in-house design team

© NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM, LONDON (PEAFOWL) © PRIVATE COLLECTOR, DAVID J LEWIS FOR F AMILY INTERESTS (GRECO) © PETER MARSHALL (LONDON, 1991

Books

Henry Cole and the Chamber of Horrors/ The Victoria and Albert Museum

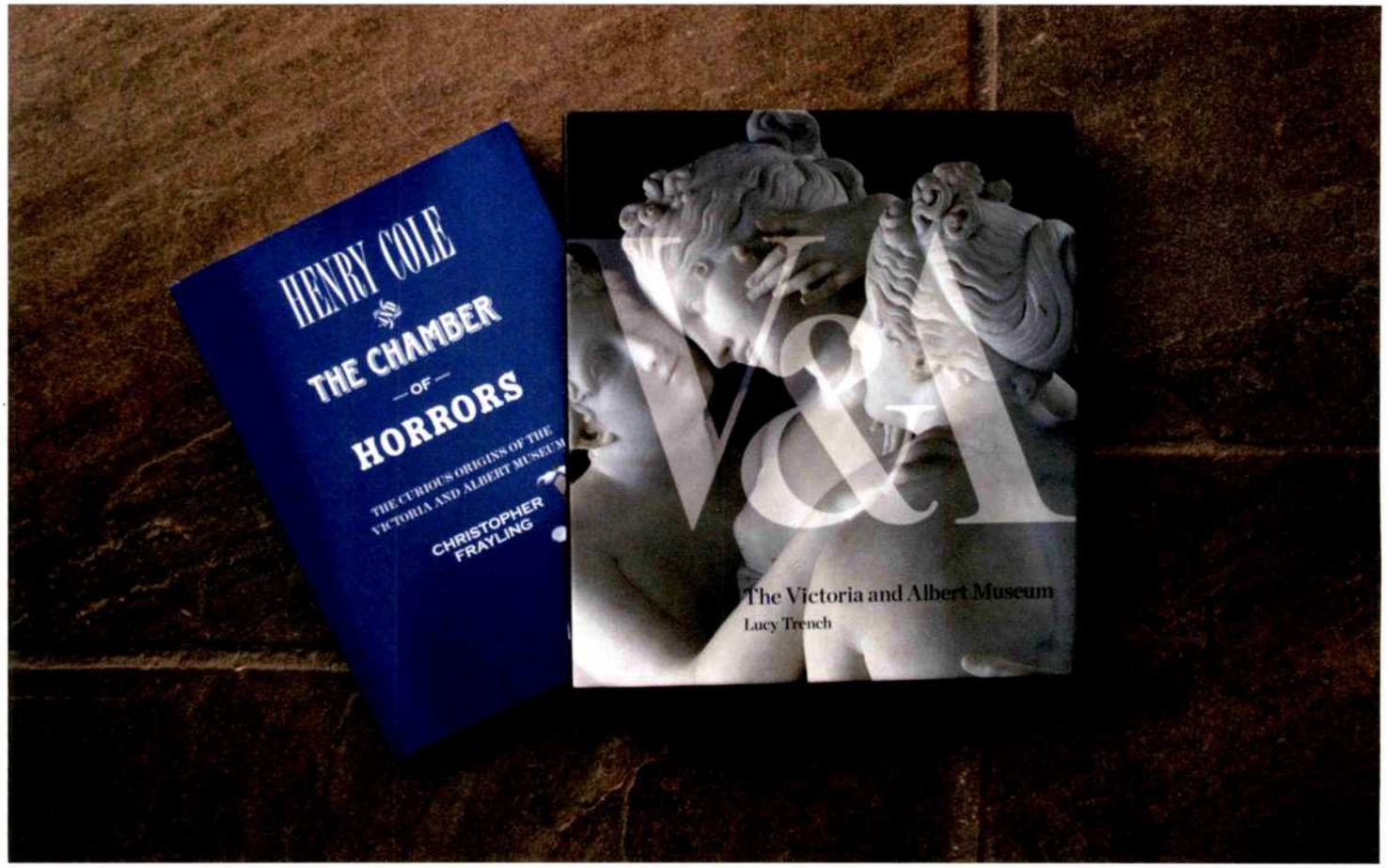
Designs to be celebrated and designs to be excoriated: two books and two views on the V&A. By *Timothy Mason*

Two very different publications from the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) begin from the same point, but then quickly go their own ways. Their common starting point is not their introductions by the museum's director, Mark Jones, but the founding of the V&A, described as 1837 in one and "in the wake of the [1851] Great Exhibition" in the other. Curiously enough, the V&A's website has 1857 as the museum's foundation date, while the American Friends' site settles for 1852.

While Lucy Trench's Victoria and Albert Museum sets off on a sweeping journey through the V&A's wonderfully eclectic collections, Frayling remains at the start, his eye caught by an introductory room at Henry Cole's 1852 exhibition at Marlborough House. Cole, a central figure in the organisation of the Great Exhibition, had just been appointed general superintendent of the Government School of Design. Riding the wave of interest in contemporary design and new technology, he sought from the start to impose on design training what he called the "general principles of decorative art", central to which was the hypothesis that "ornament ought always to be secondary to utility".

To make his point in a practical way, Cole organised an exhibition in the school's new museum in Marlborough House, a precursor of the V&A. This aimed to show why some design was good, while some was founded on "false principles". The exhibition itself sounds rather modest – with work of students at the school and an assortment of purchases from the 1851 exhibition, supplemented by objects from the royal collections. What caught the public's imagination, and now the attention of Frayling, was the show's first gallery, entitled Decorations on False Principles, soon to become popularly known as the Chamber of Horrors.

The phrase first appeared in an unattributed article in the Times (of which Cole himself may well have been the author), which went on to describe the 87 objects in this introductory gallery as exhibiting "false principles of design such as vulgar and inharmonious colouring, want of meaning and



unity in pattern, graceless imitations of natural forms, etc."

Sadly, the majority of the original 87 exhibits have been mislaid during the course of the 150 years since this exhibition was mounted. Frayling has been able to track down 17 of them and a varied bunch they are – wallpaper decorated with railway scenes; chintz, heavy with flowers; a papier-mâché tray decorated with a Landseer painting; and a gas burner in the shape of a convolvulus flower.

Much of what Cole decries would now be seen as highly desirable Victoriana; kitsch, but quite collectable. I rather like the convolvulus gas burner – and I suspect that Frayling does, too. And he notes that it was John Ruskin who reminded his contemporaries that besides the head and the hand, there was a third 'h' in the creation of "thoroughly perfect art" – the heart.

There's much else in Frayling's enjoyable book. Perhaps there's too much – certainly there's a great deal of repetition, including three identical drawings of Cole's terrier, Jim. Tighter editing would have helped – so too would the inclusion of an index.

Trench's book is a much glossier affair and it provides an elegant introduction to one of the world's great museums of decorative art. Given the size of the V&A's collection, it is inevitable that it's a high-level view. The text aims to contextualise the many elements of the collection, while the excellent photographs put flesh on the bones.

Both books contain memorable photographs of objects from the collection, but also from the history of the museum itself. For me, one stands out – a powerful photograph of Cole, taken in 1870 when he was 62. Somehow he makes it clear that he will continue to make his presence known across Albertopolis.

Henry Cole and the Chamber of Horrors, by Christopher Frayling, V&A Publishing, £9.99 ISBN 978 1 85277 623 8.
The Victoria and Albert Museum, by Lucy Trench, £20, V&A Publishing, ISBN 978 1 85177 508 8

Timothy Mason is a museum consultant

On my bookshelf

Peter Stott

Eleven Minutes Late, by Matthew Engel

This is not quite a Train Journey to the Soul of Britain of its subtitle – although that soul is occasionally glimpsed down a siding. It is, however, an entertaining overview of the charade that Britain substitutes for managing itself.

In the beginning, there was chaos, with no railway proposal too daft to prevent speculators worshipping at the shrine of profit. Not much change there then. Other countries, more interested in getting it right than being first, took the view that infrastructure involved planning. They had something called government.

When planning did eventually materialise, it was characterised by changes in administrative structure masking a lack of ideas, yesterday's solutions applied to tomorrow's problems, stakeholder interest confused for public benefit, and driven by electoral considerations.

Giving those in authority a good kicking is a national bloodsport, but ultimately Engel reminds us who's responsible for giving them that authority.

Among the trainspotters, heritage railways and their equivalents in the rest of the museum community, there is a need for a sense of mortality and renewal. The nostalgia for Melton Constable's railway past, for example, is broken by the driver who stepped down from the cab of his steam locomotive for the last time, announcing "Well, that's the last of those cast-iron bastards, then."

Peter Stott is a principal officer, heritage and learning, with Falkirk Council cultural services

MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

Notice to members

Forthcoming electronic election to new board

This month the Museums Association will hold an election to its new board. This will be our first electronic election.

On 7 February you will receive an email from MiVoice, an independent company that are running the election for the MA. This email will give you an individual code and a link to their website, where you will be able to read detailed candidate information and place your vote.

The MA has a new dynamic governance structure with a smaller board that meets more frequently. Your vote is important and we encourage you to read all the information and consider which candidates are most suited to the skill sets required.

More information about the elections can be found at:
www.museumsassociation.org/elections

Please note that if you are unable to vote electronically you should contact Georgie Stagg on 020 7426 6950 by 15 February to organise a postal vote. Please have your MA membership number to hand.

Trevor Walden Bursaries

MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

Your opportunity to apply for funding for innovative and creative professional development activities

The Trevor Walden trust offers funding for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities leading to the Associateship of the Museums Association (AMA).

This is a unique opportunity to really push the boundaries of your professional development. Over the last couple of years people have been awarded grants to carry out research trips to Ireland and Los Angeles, to visit groundbreaking exhibitions nationwide, and to attend international conferences.

The Trevor Walden Trust strongly encourages applicants to undertake different and innovative CPD activities.

Who is eligible? Anyone currently doing their AMA

What will the Trevor Walden Trust fund:

- activities that are linked to an individuals CPD action plan
- a wide range of learning activities are eligible for funding but -
  - applications for CPD activities overseas are strongly encouraged
  - applications for non formal CPD activities are strongly encouraged

Preference is given to those paying their own expenses rather than to those subsidised by an employer.

The Trust is unable to fund Museums Association events, and would discourage applications for formal courses and conferences in the UK.

The closing date for this round of Trevor Walden applications is 28th February 2011

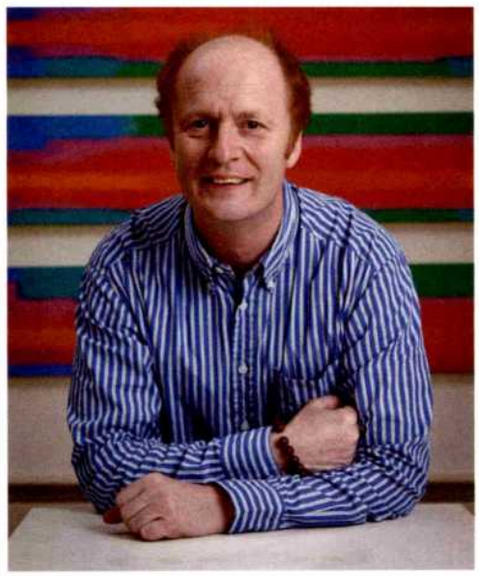
Please download an application from the MA website www.museumassociation.org/trustsandfunds or contact Georgie Stagg, Directors Assistant, 020 7426 6953, georgie@museumassociation.org for more details.

Brian Stewart (1953–2010)

Brian Stewart, the charismatic director of Falmouth Art Gallery, has died during an operation on a broken leg following a bicycle accident.

Brian's early career was varied, including working at Christie's and as a marketing executive for the Black Horse Agencies, but he found his true vocation in museums. He was art and exhibitions officer for Canterbury Museums from 1991 to 2000, before moving to Falmouth Art Gallery, quickly becoming a central figure in the arts and museums in Cornwall.

During his ten years at Falmouth, Brian transformed the gallery into a multi-award winning venue, including the Sandford Award for Heritage Education in 2010 and Guardian Family-Friendly Museum of the Year in 2006. Such awards sprang from Brian's all-encompassing efforts to make the gallery accessible to every possible audience. He instigated workshops for everyone from babies and their parents to Alzheimer's sufferers, and undertook highly successful, inclusive community projects in some of the most disadvantaged areas of Falmouth.



Brian Stewart leaves an important legacy at Falmouth Art Gallery

Renowned for his keen sense of humour and unorthodox methods of engaging audiences, Brian was also a consummate professional. He was a trustee of Kids in Museums, a fellow of the Museums Association and acted as a consultant to many collectors, and public and private galleries in Europe, America and Asia. He was author of a large number of books and articles, including the Dictionary of Portrait Painters in Britain, the Shayer Family of Painters, the Rupert Bear Dossier and the Enid Blyton Dossier.

Brian worked extremely hard to develop Falmouth Art Gallery's collection and it is perhaps fitting that the last exhibition he presented was A Decade of Collecting (until 5 February), incorporating works he had secured by Francis Bacon, Thomas Gainsborough, Ben Nicholson, Edvard Munch, Andy Warhol, Henry Moore, Eve Arnold, and Roy Lichtenstein, as well the Children's Illustration Archive he had developed, including Dan Dare, Pugwash and Bagpuss. He had been on the phone to the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund and the Art Fund from his hospital bed the day before he died regarding his latest acquisition, a Tacita Dean.

His acquisitions for Falmouth will provide him with a lasting legacy. Everyone who knew him will miss him hugely.

Alison Bevan is the director of the Penlee House Gallery & Museum and chairwoman of the South Western Federation of Museums and Galleries

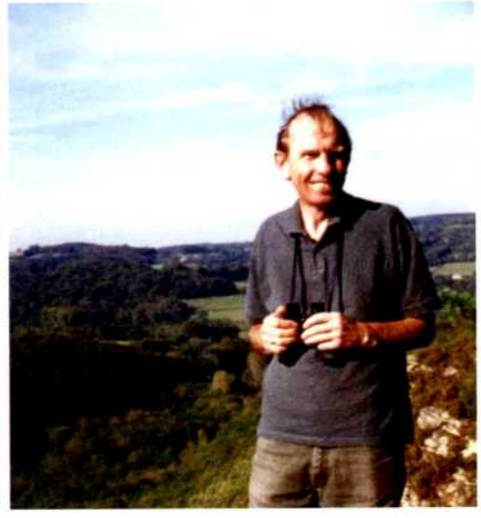
John Bainbridge (1946-2010)

John Bainbridge died suddenly in September at home at La Forge Fallot, Airel, Normandy. He had taken early retirement from the post of assistant county museums officer (education and extension services) with Somerset County Council in 2005, and moved to France with his second wife, Jane, where he pursued his lifelong interest in natural history, particularly bird-watching. His second great passion was museum education.

John left his first teaching career to start his museum career as assistant schools organiser (natural history) at Bristol City Museum & Art Gallery in 1971. In 1975 he moved to Tyne & Wear County Museums Service as its first principal education officer and later senior museums officer (natural history).

He took particular pride as honorary chairman of the Durham County Conservation Trust in its publication of the Flora and Vegetation of County Durham (1988). After his move to Somerset in 1987, natural history tended to take second place, though he found time to overhaul the natural history content of the Schools Loan Service, to create award-winning exhibition centres in Somerset and to champion the Somerset Environmental Records Centre.

Managing a countywide education service and exhibition programmes at the main museum sites during the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s was challenging, but well founded on the excellent networks that John had built up within the education authority. He was always keen to share his experiences with museum colleagues and learn from them. He contributed to the work of the national and regional Group for Education in Museums through those times when the educational role of museums was being eclipsed.



John Bainbridge was passionate about museum education

He is remembered by his friends and colleagues as an unassuming man with a rather puckish sense of humour who passionately advocated the importance of museum education services. The encouragement and respect he showed to colleagues, volunteers and Friends, who supported the exhibition and education programmes provided on site and in schools, earned him great affection.

He was at his best working in teams and leading groups of like-minded people. He gave, and received great loyalty in return. It was not unknown for him to don a smock and floppy hat at Somerset Rural Life Museum to interpret the mysteries of Victorian living to primary schoolchildren.

David Dawson is an independent consultant and former Somerset County museums officer

Profile Tim Robertson: charity chief

A former social worker, Tim Robertson is now chief executive of the Koestler Trust, a charity that encourages prisoners to express themselves through art and organises exhibitions of their work.

What kind of art do offenders produce?
Most of them haven't done anything artistic since they were at school, but they have time on their hands in prison and arts classes give them an outlet. We see a mixture of very dark and angry work and its exact opposite – lots of wild animals, wide open spaces and flying fantasies; some of the best work combines the two. I have a painting in my office of a man in a prison cell with his head in his hands but behind him the walls have fallen down and there's a beach landscape and birds flying off towards the horizon.

What difference does art make to their time inside?
It costs us a lot of money to hold a lot of people in prison so it must be worth our while to invest some of that in not just warehousing them, but trying to get them to change. Offenders have done something less than human in their lives; it could be murder or simply not thinking about the effects their stealing could have on another person's life. We need to help them be fully human again and that means being able to celebrate and have hope as well as recognising when you've got things wrong.

How was life as a social worker?
I think it can be a thankless task. I originally started off in the arts when I was in my early 20s but, as I had enjoyed a very comfortable upbringing with everything going my way, I felt I had to do something a little tougher. I wanted to be a poet, but I realised it was impossible until I'd seen a bit more of life.

Tim Robertson says art helps prisoners feel human again

I was in social work for 14 years and got out of it because life became so difficult in a big public bureaucracy.

Looking back, I sometimes can't believe I was ever a frontline child protection social worker. I remember once having four officers restraining a mother as I took her child away in a police car.

You're still helping people now: are you on a one-man care crusade?
I don't feel like I'm being some sort of Mother Teresa; I just get lots out of what I do. We've just had 15,000 people through the exhibition for which the Koestler Trust receives 6,000 entries and I get to show that art off to the world.

Every time I speak at conferences, all the other presenters show a few old graphs and tired pie charts and I get to give a lovely artistic slideshow.

Moves and honours

In the New Year's honours list, CBEs go to: **Christopher Brown**, director of the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford; **Carole Souter**, director of the Heritage Lottery Fund; and **Janet Vitmayer**, chief executive of the Horniman Museum, London.

Helen Ashby, head of knowledge and collections at the National Railway Museum, York, receives the OBE, as does **Dillian Gordon**, a former curator at the National Gallery, London; historian **Robert Balmer** for services to maritime heritage; and **Sonia Rolt**, for services to industrial archaeology and heritage.

Patricia Birley, director of the Vindolanda Trust, receives the MBE, as does **Joyce Williams**, for services to Clifton Park Museum, Rotherham; **Peter Brown**, director of Fairfax House, York; **Jean Dagnall**, for services to the Clevedon & District Archaeological Society, North Somerset; **Harry Hatrick**, for services to heritage, Northern Ireland; and **Elizabeth Hamilton**, a volunteer at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Gregor Muir joins the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, as its new executive director this month. He was a director of Hauser & Wirth's London gallery.

The Royal National Lifeboat Institution has appointed **Andrew Lidster** as the new manager at the Grace Darling Museum, Bamburgh. He joins from the National Trust.

At the Royal Academy of Arts, London, **Nicholas Grimshaw** has been re-elected as president. **Maurice Cockrill** was re-elected as keeper until September 2011 when he will become a senior academician and **Eileen Cooper** will succeed him.

Gregor Muir

Joyce Williams

Claire McDade leaves Norton Priory Museum & Gardens, Cheshire, where she was director, to join Paxton House, Berwick-upon-Tweed, as director.

The new manager and curator of the RAF Air Defence Radar Museum is **Chris Morshead**.

Historian **Nick Hewitt** has joined Portsmouth Naval Base Property Trust as its head of attractions and collections.

Rachael Lovering has taken voluntary redundancy from Newport Museum and Art Gallery, where she was the social history curator.

Who got the job?

Assistant curator, Dover Museum & Bronze Age Boat Gallery, Dover, Kent.
Salary range £30,081-£35,121
Fixed term for one year initially.
Advertised: MJ August 2010

Samantha Harris

What attracted you to the job? Working with a locally diverse and nationally significant collection relating to the history associated with Dover as the historic gateway to Europe.

Most memorable experience in the job? Working with a team of 24 Dover Museum volunteers, archaeological groups and other local museums for a Stores Sort day. This involved object organisation, repacking, documentation and housekeeping.

Other jobs assistant curator, English Heritage; museum assistant, Dover Museum.

Qualifications MA museum studies, BA history.

Museums Journal Jobs

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Email adverts@museumsassociation.org

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(fixed term contract for 3-years)

JOB REF: 1903

Culture is at the heart of our vision for the future. A £50m regeneration programme is underway, with the flagship redevelopment of the city's art museum, opening in 2012, completing an impressive heritage portfolio that includes the Museum of Canterbury, the Roman Museum and museums in Whitstable and Herne Bay.

Less than an hour from London and a stone's throw from continental Europe, Canterbury is changing. Could you be the one to transform our museums and enhance Canterbury's reputation as an international heritage and visitor destination?

For this newly created post, we seek an outstanding, experienced individual, with vision, energy and entrepreneurship alongside an appetite for innovation and change.

For an informal discussion regarding the post please contact **David Ford, Deputy Head of Culture and Enterprise on 01227 862 526**
For further information and the application pack: **01304 872 799** or **www.canterbury.gov.uk/jobs**
Closing date for receipt of completed applications: 12 noon 24 February 2011. Interviews will take place on Tuesday 8 or Wednesday 16 March 2011

CANTERBURY CITY COUNCIL

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Curator (European Art)

(for a period up to 3 years) £24,909.23 - £29,328.94
Location: The Burrell Collection, 2060 Pollokshaws Road, Glasgow, G41 1AT Ref: 4324

Glasgow Life is looking for a curator with the knowledge and enthusiasm to deliver curatorial projects at the Burrell Collection, working mainly with the internationally significant collection of European Art post 1600. You will have the passion and dedication to help drive forward new ways of interpreting the Collection for a range of audiences. A relevant degree is essential as is knowledge of Microsoft Packages and previous experience of major redisplays would be an advantage. Enhanced Disclosure Checks will apply to this post. For additional information regarding this post, please visit **www.glasgowlife.org.uk**.
Phone: 0845 270 1078. Closing date: 12 noon on Tuesday 15 February 2011.

Glasgow Life is the operating name of Culture and Sport Glasgow. Culture and Sport Glasgow is a limited company which is registered in Scotland with registration number SC313851 and has its Registered Office at 20 Trongate, Glasgow G1 5ES. Culture and Sport Glasgow is a company limited by guarantee and is registered as a charity (No SC037844) with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator.

MANCHESTER JEWISH MUSEUM

Chief Executive Officer
35 hrs pw - Salary £28,000 pa
Experience is required

Write or telephone for Application Pack
Manchester Jewish Museum
190 Cheetham Hill Road
Manchester
M8 8LW

Telephone 0161 834 9879
Mark Envelope "CEO"

Closing Date:
Monday 7th March 2011

MANCHESTER JEWISH MUSEUM

To subscribe to **Museums Journal** or **Museum Practice** please email **pamela@museumsassociation.org**

University of Glasgow

Museum and Art Gallery

Curator

£38,951 - £45,155 Ref: U80029

You will care for, provide access to, and encourage & facilitate use, development and interpretation of the Hunterian's Art Collection, with particular emphasis on the French and Scottish pre-1945 collections.

This post is maternity cover for 6 months in the first instance.

Apply online at www.glasgow.ac.uk/jobs

Closing date 14th February 2011.

The University is committed to equality of opportunity in employment.
The University of Glasgow, charity number SC004401.

www.glasgow.ac.uk

Museums Journal

Our readers recognise **Museums Journal Jobs** and its online recruitment listings as the very best place to find the next step for their careers.

CHICHESTER DISTRICT COUNCIL

Expressions of Interest sought for Exhibition Services, Conservation and Removal for New Museum for Chichester District Council

A new museum of 1,200 sq m floor area is being built in Chichester for Chichester District Council. It is planned that these services will commence in summer 2011. The new museum will replace the current museum and the contents, including collections, will be moved to the new building. The Council has appointed Event Communications as exhibition designers.

The Council now seeks Expressions of Interest for consultancy and a number of supply/service packages from appropriately experienced and qualified companies. Companies may wish to apply for single or multiple packages where their experience is relevant. Please ensure that this is indicated clearly in your return.

Construction Manager

To provide services including construction management of the exhibition; co-ordination of client, exhibition designer and exhibition suppliers; co-ordination between the building architect, construction project manager and main construction contractor and cost management of the exhibition and decant budgets.

Exhibition Services

Package 1 Audio-visual Software – to develop, supply and commission two audio-visual programmes; one to interpret the Roman remains on the museum site and one to illustrate places in the District.

Package 2 Mounts – for the geology, archaeology and social history collections. This will include the Jupiter Stone (approx. 0.5 tons) and the Chilgrove mosaic (approx 4m by 4m).

Conservation

Conservation of collections – primarily archaeological and social history material with only local topographical images and some geological specimens.

Removals

Specialist removal works – crating the packed collections, transferring them from current to new museums in Chichester plus general removals of office furniture etc.

Companies wishing to Express an Interest should send the following documentation:

- Audited annual accounts for last 3 years
- Insurance details
- Accreditation of Health and Safety (SSIP equivalent)
- A profile of relevant museum specific experience with example projects including budget and scope of works you were responsible for.

Please send these to: Leisure and Wellbeing (Exhibition Expressions of Interest) Chichester District Council, 1 East Pallant, Chichester PO19 1TY **by 12 noon on 22nd February 2011**.

In case of queries please contact Anne Bone on 01243 534793 or email abone@chichester.gov.uk

Shortlisted applicants will be notified accordingly.

This is a request for Expression of Interest only and the Council does not guarantee it will proceed to request formal tenders.

Museums Journal

The essential place to advertise

Museums Journal Jobs is delivered to an ABC audited circulation of 7,552.

This includes over 5,500 individuals and 2,000 cultural and heritage organisations every issue.

Jobs are also available online on the Museums Association website **www.museumsassociation.org**

The site attracts over 27,000 visits per month and all jobs are posted free of charge if you advertise in **Museums Journal Jobs**.

With these products we ensure the breadth of coverage and the high profile needed to reach the right audience at the right time.

To find out more call us on 020 7426 6930 or email **adverts@museumsassociation.org**

Acquisitions: The Holburne Museum, Bath, has received a major bequest of paintings from the collection of the writer Somerset Maugham

The Procession to Calvary by Brueghel the Younger stays in the UK following successful fundraising

Johann Zoffany's 18th-century portrait of actor Charles Macklin as Shylock is part of the Somerset Maugham bequest to the Holburne Museum

On offer

When disposing, give priority to transferring, preferably by gift, to accredited museums. Any proposed sales to other museums listed here have been judged to be compatible with the Museums Association's (MA) code of ethics. For further advice, see the MA's ethical guidelines (*www.museumsassociation.org*) or contact the MA's ethics department (020 7426 6953). More details about some of the items on offer below can be found on the MA's Find an Object listing service, *www.museumsassociation.org/collections/find-an-object*. Find an Object allows you to post adverts for disposals or loans throughout the month. All objects for sale on the Find an Object site must comply with Section 6 of the MA's code of ethics. Disposal toolkit guidelines can be found at *www.museumsassociation.org/collections/disposal*

● The Imperial War Museum (IWM) North, Salford, offers a large number of Kodak carousel slide projectors (Ektapro 5050), lenses, as well as numerous dissolve units and **control cables** available to interested museums and galleries. Details on request. Items must be collected from the IWM North or IWM London.
Contact: Laura Whalley
tel: 0161 836 4020.
email: lwhalley@iwm.org.uk

● The London Metropolitan Archives has three keyless wood and glass-sided **display cases** (1520 x 460 x 920cms, depth 75cms) to give away to an interested museum or gallery.
Contact: Steve Maberly
tel: 020 7332 3804
email: stephen.maberly@cityoflondon.gov.uk

● The Royal Air Force Museum, Cosford, wishes to dispose of 52 large items of equipment, including general service equipment, vehicles, **aircraft components** and engines. Details available on request; this offer is open until 1 March.
Contact: Al McLean
email: al.mclean@rafmuseum.org

● Towneley Hall Museum, Burnley, wishes to dispose of items from its industrial collections including Lancashire and other looms, street-lamp shafts, **blacksmith bellows** and TV tubes. Items are in variable conditions.
Contact: Mike Townend
tel: 01282 424213
email: mtownend@burnley.gov.uk

Acquisitions

● Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales has acquired the Mytilidae Dish, a piece made by silversmith **Ben Ryan**, who was chosen as the winner of the 2010 Young Designer-Silversmith Award organised by the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths, London. Ryan was given the chance to make a piece of silver in a leading silversmithing workshop for a national museum collection.

● Three drawings by British artist **David Bomberg** have been acquired by the Ben Uri Gallery, London. The Family, Sappers under Hill 60 and Ghetto Theatre; Ghetto Theatre were bought by the gallery at Christie's last July with help from the Art Fund. The works cost a total of £7,115, with the Art Fund contributing £3,803 towards their purchase.

● The Holburne Museum, Bath, due to reopen after a £13.6m renovation on 14 May, has received a major bequest of paintings from the collection of the novelist and playwright, **Somerset Maugham**. The collection includes important works by Zoffany, Francis Hayman and Samuel de Wilde. Maugham started to collect theatrical paintings in 1912. The collection will be shared between the museum and the city's Theatre Royal.

● The National Coal Mining Museum for England, Wakefield, has acquired a first edition of Georgius Agricola's volume, **De re metallica**, the definitive early treatise on mining methods,

engineering, chemistry and geology. Published in 1556, the book contains woodcuts that have been used by historians to explain mining life and technology. The museum bought the volume at auction with help from the Art Fund, which gave a grant of £5,313 towards the purchase.

● The Royal Air Force Museum has unveiled the display of Seaplane Tender 206 at its site in Hendon, London. The launch was developed by **TE Lawrence** – Lawrence of Arabia – after his famous desert exploits in the first world war, when he joined the RAF's Marine Section in 1925 under the pseudonym TE Shaw and worked with the British Power Boat Company to develop rescue boats after witnessing a fatal seaplane crash in 1931. A further vessel, RAF Pinnace 1374, has been placed on the National Register of Historic Vessels of the United Kingdom.

● An early 17th-century painting by Pieter Brueghel the Younger, The **Procession to Calvary** has been saved for the nation after a three-month fundraising campaign by the Art Fund, the National Trust and National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF) to raise the £2.72m price. Money came from the NHMF (£1.03m), the Art Fund (£500,000), the public (over £680,000) and nearly £510,000 from trusts and foundations. The painting is on public display at Nostell Priory, West Yorkshire.

Young designer-silversmith Ben Ryan with his Mytilidae Dish, acquired by National Museum Wales

● Recent grants from the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund have enabled Canterbury Museum to buy a rare Anglo-Saxon coin of **Aedilheard**, archbishop of Canterbury from Otford which bears the name of the archbishop as well as the king, Offa. Nantwich Museum has acquired a late 13th-century brooch from Hurleston with the support of the fund.

The Seaplane Tender 206 launch was developed by TE Lawrence after his Arabian war service

Export bar

A temporary export bar has been placed on Portrait of a Young Woman, said to be by Rubens. The decision on the export licence application is deferred for a period ending 17 March 2011 inclusive. This may be extended until 17 May 2011 inclusive if a serious intention to raise funds with a view to purchase at the recommended price of £1m is expressed.
Contact: the Secretariat the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest, Museums, Libraries and Archives Council
Telephone 020 7273 8271

Funding

● Three Recognised Collections of National Significance have been awarded **capital funding** by the Scottish Government. The University of Glasgow's Hunterian Museum and Art Gallery is to receive £115,000 to install storage for its collection of zoological specimens. The A-listed Provost Skene's House, Aberdeen, receives £64,651 to create a new exhibition space, allowing visitors more opportunities to interact with the collection. At Discovery Point, funding of £44,350 will allow improvements to visitor facilities including automated entrance gates to improve access to the building.

Awards

● Apollo Magazine has chosen the **Staffordshire Hoard** as the winner of 2010's Acquisition of the Year. The hoard was jointly acquired by Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery and the Potteries Museum & Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent, following major fundraising which met its target ahead of schedule last March. This ensured that the Anglo-Saxon treasure would remain in the UK.

● The Textile Society offers an award of **£3,000** for a textile-related project within the museum, archive, library or repository sector. The award is designed to support textile-related projects that

MA events calendar

MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

The MA regularly organises events, conferences and seminars. For further information, see www.museumsassociation.org/events or contact: Lorraine O'Leary 02074266940 lorraine@museumsassociation.org

Object handling and packing
3 February 2011, Museums Association offices, London
This training day teaches you how to assess objects, use the right materials, and ensure the safety of the objects and their handlers.

Forward future: achieving accreditation
9 February 2011, Charity Centre, London
The importance of forward planning has been recognised in the updated Museums, Libraries and Archives Council's accreditation scheme, and developing a strong forward plan is now a central element. The conference takes you through the steps of the process.

Responsible disposal
10 February 2011, Museums Association offices, London
This workshop uses the MA's disposal toolkit to introduce the ethics of disposal and how to identify consultation resources.

Copyright law for the cultural sector
18 February 2011, Museums Association offices, London
Copyright law affects every aspect of museum work. This workshop takes you through the legal framework to develop a copyright law strategy.

How to create a podcast
7 March 2011, Museums Association offices, London
This hands-on training day takes participants

will help achieve greater awareness and access to the public. The project should have an educational objective which will increase public access to the collection or archive. The museum should have accredited/provisional accreditation status or a registration with the Society of Archivists, if an archive. Applications for the Museum Bursary Award must be received by 1 April.
Contact: bursaries@textilesociety.org.uk

● The **European Museum Forum** invites European museums to enter its 35th European Museum of the Year Award 2012.
www.europeanmuseumforum.org
Contact: Doric McMillan
tel: 0151 478 4559
email: emf@liverpoolmuseums.org.uk

● Thomas Demand, Roe Ethridge, Jim Goldberg and Elad Lassry have been shortlisted by the Photographers' Gallery, London, for its annual **Deutsche Börse** Photography Prize. The winner will be announced on 26 April and the prize will be on display at Ambika P3, the University of Westminster, London, from 2-30 April.

● The **National Lottery Awards** 2011 are now open for entries from Lottery-funded projects across the UK. The awards are the annual search to find the UK's favourite lottery-funded project. The National Lottery is encouraging these projects, and any other organisation that has received Lottery funding over the past 16 years, to enter. Entries must be received by 5pm, 18 February.
www.lotterygoodcauses.org.uk.

The Natural History Museum, London, has taken two Evening Standard People's Choice awards

● The Natural History Museum has won two Evening Standard People's Choice Awards – the Best London for Free Experience and the **Best Family Fun**, which are part of the BT Visit London Awards 2010.

Roe Ethridge, who created this Ballet Studio image, has been shortlisted for the Deutsche Börse Photography Prize

© ROE ETHRIDGE/COURTESY GREENGRASS LONDON/ ANDREW KREPS GALLERY, NEW YORK

● Winners of the 2010 **Jodi Awards** 2010 for accessible digital culture include Historic Royal Palaces (winner, Digital Access Online for its British Sign Language visitor information); and the British Dental Association Museum (winner, Digital Access for People with a Learning Disability).
www.jodiawards.org.uk/awards

● The winners of 2010's conservation awards, given by the **Institute of Conservation**, the Anna Plowden Trust and the Digital Preservation Coalition were announced in December. The Anna Plowden Trust Award for Research and Innovation in Conservation went to Tate AXA Art Modern Paints Project; and to Eura Conservation. The Pilgrim Trust Award was won by the Perry Lithgow Partnership for its work on Worcestershire's Hanbury Hall staircase wall paintings, with the British Library, London, commended for its digital access work on the Codex Sinaiticus. The Student Conservator of the Year Award went to Simon Lambert and Cardiff University; Laura Hinde and the Courtauld Institute of Art, London, were commended.
www.conservationawards.org.uk

Web news

● The British Library has launched its first app, Treasures, for multiple mobile platforms. Costing £2.39, users will be able to view important texts such as the first edition of Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and the 1,000 year-old poem **Beowulf**.

● English Heritage launches its new **South Downs** website on 1 April to coincide with the creation of the South Downs National Park.
www.english-heritage.org.uk

● BT has relaunched Connected Earth, its telecommunications heritage website.
www.connected-earth.com

through the podcasting process, from creation to distribution.

Making money from copyright
8 March 2011, Museums Association offices, London
Copyright and licensing can provide new opportunities for income. This training day explores the legal and practical issues associated with the exploitation of rights.

Project management
10 March 2011, Museums Association offices, London
In the current climate, there is an increasing need to plan and manage projects effectively. This training day will help you plan, implement and control projects to achieve maximum benefit.

Volunteer management and the law
15 March 2011, Museums Association offices, London
Understand your legal responsibilities towards volunteers.

Alex Morrison is speaking at a one-day conference in March on creating effective digital content

Changing platforms: creating effective digital content
15 March 2011, Royal College of Surgeons, London
Best practice advice and new thinking on how to create effective digital content across a variety of new media platforms, including websites, mobile devices and gallery displays.

Investigating, dating and documenting garments
17 March 2011, Museum of London
A training day for anyone working with costume and textiles who is interested in gaining more experience and increasing their specialist knowledge.

Making the case for your museum
22 March 2011, Museums Association offices
An essential workshop to help you understand the basics of successful advocacy for your museum or gallery.

Unidentified group 'spirit' photograph, St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art, Glasgow

Clare Gray

"Death is one thing we all have in common and this exhibition is the result of a year-long project by artist Gillian Steel in which she talked to people about their thoughts and experiences of the subject.

More than 100 people contributed through interviews and a symposium held here in the museum. One of the things that surprised us most was the openness of the interviewees and their willingness to talk. One of the reasons Gillian wanted to explore the topic in the first place was because people typically don't want to discuss it.

This is one of a series of seven black-and-white photographs brought to the symposium by one participant, Dorothy Martin Ross. The pictures appear to show ghostly images among the living and the response from the rest of the group was immediate; discussions sprang up quite naturally about whether people believed in the afterlife or not.

Clare Gray is a learning and access curator at Glasgow Life

The pictures had been passed down through generations of her family and, although they are very powerful, not a lot is known about them. They have a kind of classic Gothic horror look to them and one of the things that strikes you first is that everyone is very formally dressed but no one is smiling.

I initially jumped to the conclusion that there was such a spooky atmosphere because these people had experienced some terrible fate. But you have to bear in mind, however, that the cameras of the period had long exposure times that meant people simply couldn't hold a smile long enough.

Apparently, even after photographic technology had moved on, people continued striking serious poses when being photographed because the process was still quite a big deal for them.

But who these people are and where or why they were photographed remains unknown. It's mainly men with just a few women at the front but no children, so it's unlikely to be a family portrait. Maybe it's a works photograph; if so, what was the occasion?

What we can say is that two ghostly heads appear in the picture; the second one seems to be flying around like a comet. We can't provide any concrete answers, we're just encouraging people to talk.

These photographs continue to draw people in the moment they come into the exhibition space. Some are immediately convinced they are cast-iron proof of ghosts. Others ask the gallery staff if they know one way or the other."

Interview by John Holt. Stardust: Some Thoughts on Death runs at the St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art, Glasgow, until 30 June

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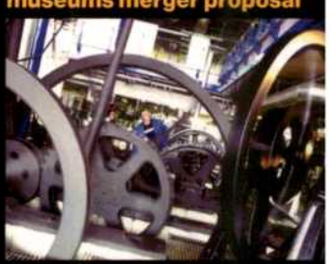
Museums Journal

Magical mystery tours The highs and lows of pop music and museums

Learned friends
Making the most of research partnerships

Extraordinary Heroes Imperial War Museum

Joined-up thinking
Thinktank and Birmingham museums merger proposal



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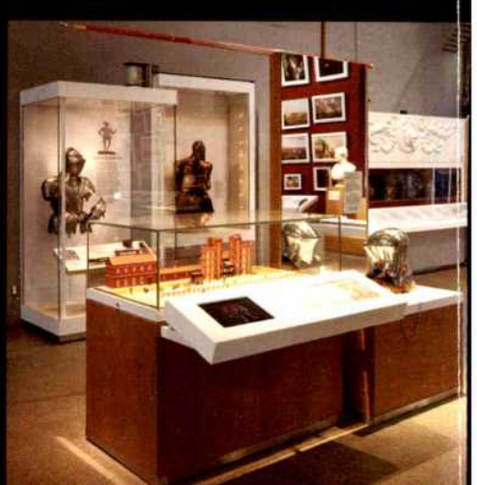

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MAIN COVER IMAGE: NATIONAL MUSEUMS LIVERPOOL. THIS PAGE © UCL MEDIA SERVICES

Editorial

Big society wrecked by public sector cuts

The good ship big society was relaunched last month by the prime minister. Watching from the icy shores of the public spending cuts, it looked a bit like the relaunch of the Titanic after a patch-up job.

Despite all the bluster, there is still an appalling lack of clarity about what the big society actually is. If it means more of us should make an active contribution to society, then it's hard to be opposed to it. But if it's an excuse for cuts and dismantling the welfare state, that's an altogether different matter.

David Cameron said the big society would allow communities to run services that the government can't afford, but that it's not a cover for cuts. A contradiction if ever there was one. Also last month, Liverpool City Council withdrew from the pilot scheme and Phil Redmond, chairman of National Museums Liverpool, said the scheme had been undermined by the cuts.

It has been estimated that the voluntary sector faces £5bn in cuts, including the end of grants and contracts from local authorities. These cuts will mean the death of precisely the kind of grassroots, volunteer-run projects that the big society is meant to promote.

'The cuts will mean the death of the grassroots projects that the big society is meant to promote'

Take the example of Barnet Museum in London. The volunteer-run museum gets a small annual grant from its local council, plus the use of its premises, which the council owns. At a meeting last month, the council said it will withdraw all funding for the museum and that it must pay a commercial rent – or leave the building it has occupied for the past 80 years.

The volunteers have put forward an alternative operating model, which they say will save the council cash, but it has been rejected. Barnet, for the record, is a Conservative-run council.

If a well-established and popular, volunteer-based community organisation such as Barnet Museum cannot succeed, then the prime minister's vision for the big society is dead in the water. A basic fact remains: nobody can volunteer in a museum that is shut (see vox pop, p22).

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www.museumsassociation.org/conference

MLA publishes Renaissance budget

MA calls for rethink of core museums as MLA reveals spending plan

Rebecca Atkinson

Hub museums are to receive £34.5m in grant aid from the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) in its provisional Renaissance budget for 2011-12 – but as Museums Journal went to press, business plans for the hubs were still not finalised.

A further £2.8m has been set aside as a result of a predicted overspend by hubs. It will cover projects approved as part of the 2010-11 business plans and already underway.

The V&A Purchase Grant and Prism will be funded from the Renaissance budget in 2011-12, receiving £600,000 and £150,000 respectively. A further £400,000 will support designated collections while £300,000 has been earmarked to help museums develop through the accreditation process.

The Collections Trust and Culture 24 will receive £300,000 in total, while subject specialist networks have been allocated £120,000. About £3m will be spent on museum development.

Roy Clare: spending priorities based on long-term vision

The budget for Renaissance was cut by 15% in 2011-12 by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport following the comprehensive spending review.

Roy Clare, chief executive of the MLA, said: "We have looked objectively across all of our investments that support museums and collections, and we have set priorities based on the long-term vision for the best possible network of museums across the country."

Meanwhile, the Museums Association (MA) has called on Arts Council England to rethink the concept of the core museum model in light of the new economic and political landscape.

Mark Taylor, director of the MA and a member of the Renaissance review team, said: "Much of the progress made in the regions over the last few years is in danger of being dissipated. In these circumstances, a reassessment of the number, criteria and role of core museums seems sensible."

British Film Institute gallery to shut following 15% cut to grant-in-aid

Shake-up at institute will lead to loss of 29 jobs

Gareth Harris

The gallery at the British Film Institute (BFI) on London's Southbank will close next month because of a 15% cut in real terms to the body's grant-in-aid over the next four years.

Government funding will be reduced from £15m in 2011-12 to £14.6m in 2014-15.

A restructuring of the organisation will involve the BFI library relocating from central London to the space currently occupied by the gallery. The shake-up will lead to the loss of 29 jobs.

Phil Collins' Marxism Today will be the final exhibition at the BFI gallery

"This does not mean that we are splitting up the BFI collection," said a spokesman. He added that exhibitions relating to the moving image could still be seen in the mezzanine area and atrium space at BFI Southbank.

"The move is not necessarily about saving money," he said. "The funding cut is driving this development, but we have to focus on things only the BFI can do."

The gallery, which is currently hosting an exhibition of works by artist Phil Collins, closes on 10 April.

Birmingham considers a museum trust merger

City council looks at options for Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery

Rebecca Atkinson

Cuts monitor

Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery could be merged into a trust-operating model with the city's Thinktank science museum in 2012-13 under plans being considered by the local council.

Martin Mullaney, Birmingham's cabinet member for leisure, sport and culture, said: "We're looking at options for joining the museum service and Thinktank under a single plan. One option is a trust, but no decisions have been made and we'll consult with all interested parties."

It is not clear whether the two museums would be placed within the existing Thinktank trust or a new one, or whether admission charges would be introduced.

Birmingham City Council is looking to save an estimated £1.3m in 2011-12 and £2.4m by 2014-15 on its culture spend.

Thinktank could be joined in trust status by Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery

Nick Winterbotham, Thinktank's chief executive officer, said: "This level of cuts is unprecedented and we are working on how to preserve the reputation and achievements of both museum services."

Elsewhere, **Leicester City Council** plans to close the Belgrave Hall Museum & Gardens, Abbey Pumping Station Museum, Jewry Wall Museum and Guildhall to the public from October, other than for special events. It is seeking other organisations or community groups to take over the running of the sites.

Stuart Bailey, chairman of the Leicester Civic Society, has written to Sarah Levitt, head of museums at Leicester City Council, complaining that the plans are "narrow-minded and myopic".

The **Highlands Council** has cut funding to the 21 museums it supports by 15%, although none will close. The council has saved an additional £133,300 by introducing seasonal opening hours at Inverness Museum and Art Gallery and the Highland Folk Museum, and deleting several posts including a collections officer and curator.

Meanwhile, **Market Harborough District Council** has backtracked on plans to cut the Harborough Museum's £102,500 budget for five assistant staff after a petition opposing the cuts attracted more than 2,500 signatures.

But David Johnson, chairman of the Market Harborough Historical Society, warned that the reprieve was for only a year.

National Maritime Museum reintroduces charging

£10 tickets for admission to Meridian buildings and Flamsteed House

Patrick Steel

The National Maritime Museum has announced that it will charge for access to part of its site and collections from this month.

The museum expects to generate between £2.5m and £3m a year from sales of tickets for the Meridian Courtyard, Flamsteed House and the Meridian buildings. Tickets will cost £10 and will be valid for a year.

Chris Styles, director of the Royal Observatory Greenwich, said: "In common with many heritage sites, both in London and across the UK, we have decided to make the standard admission ticket for Flamsteed House and the Meridian Courtyard an annual pass.

"We want our visitors to be able to make the most of our historic site, to explore our galleries further and revisit their favourite exhibits, and to return with family and friends. The annual pass is a simple and effective means of supporting these aims."

Entrance to the Meridian Courtyard, the Time Galleries and the Astronomer Royal's Apartments, which are housed in Flamsteed House, has been free since 2001.

The Meridian Courtyard receives 1.6m visitors a year

A statement from the museum said that the decision to introduce charges, was made by the NMM's Trustees with approval from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, and reflected the need to maintain the site, which had experienced "wear and tear" as a result of higher visitor numbers.

Last year, the Museum in Docklands scrapped its annual pass scheme in favour of free admission. A spokeswoman for the museum said that charging was never off the agenda for any museum, but that it would remain free as long as it had the funds to support it.

In brief

MLA Accreditation report
The MLA has published a report, Accreditation: What Next?, outlining the sector's requirements from a revamped Accreditation scheme. A new standard is being trialled by 10 museums and services across the UK. Arts Council England will take on the scheme's administration later this year. *http://bit.ly/h3MiaM*

Collections Designated

The Royal Horticultural Society's Lindley Library, Chetham's Library in Manchester and the Joseph Wright of Derby Collection (pictured is Wright's A Philosopher Lecturing on the Orrery, 1766) at Derby Museum and Art Gallery have been awarded Designated status by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA). There are now 135 collections in the scheme, which will be taken over by Arts Council England following the abolition of the MLA.

New textile centre opens
The Textile Conservation Centre has opened a Centre for Textile Conservation and Technical Art History at the University of Glasgow. The organisation's previous centre, at the University of Southampton, closed in October 2009.

Swindon move off
The Trustees of the British Postal Museum & Archive (BPMA) have dropped plans to develop a new museum in Swindon, Wiltshire. The BPMA got a Heritage Lottery Fund stage one pass for the project early last year but has changed its plans because of "significant changes to funding expectations particularly from corporate supporters". A statement from the BPMA said it retained its commitment to securing an accessible future home.

Royal prerogative: HLF's £50,000 grant allows three army regiments to display their collections

The Heritage Lottery Fund has awarded £50,000 to create a new museum to house the historic collections of the Queen's Royal Lancers, the Sherwood Rangers Yeomanry and the South Nottinghamshire Hussars. The collections will be displayed together for the first time in the newly renovated wing of Thoresby Courtyard, in Nottinghamshire. The funding will help to create an education and research room in the museum, which is expected to be completed by June. Pictured is Richard Caton Woodville's Charge of the Light Brigade, which involved one of the regiments that became the Queen's Royal Lancers – the 17th Lancers.

Grant fund reopens

£8m improvement fund invites bids from April

Sharon Heal

The Museums and Galleries Improvement Fund has announced a new round of funding, but it will have less money available than previously.

The fund, which is jointly funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Wolfson Foundation, was suspended in 2010-11 pending the outcome of the comprehensive spending review.

The fund will now allocate £8m in two tranches over the next four years. Previously it awarded £28m over the eight years between 2001 and 2009.

The fund finances improvements in displays and schemes that increase access to and enhance public spaces.

www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/18022011-fund

Corporate giving to museums falls

Rise in donations from individuals and trusts makes up for fall in business investment

Gareth Harris

A substantial fall in business investment in museums in 2009-10 was offset by a boost in individual giving, according to research published by Arts & Business.

Data from 387 museums revealed that corporate giving was down 10% on the previous financial year to £22m (average investment of £57,009), while individual donations rose 24% to £37m (with an average investment of £95,849).

Trusts and foundations gave £36m to museums, up 22% (average investment £91,898).

Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums' Individual giving campaign

In total, the amount of private investment received by museums rose 13% to £94.7m, of which £72.3m went to "major" museums.

Tina Mermiri, research manager at Arts & Business, said: "Survey participants remain confidential, but the figures are robust and cover the private investment received by museums of all sizes across the UK [including national and local-authority institutions]."

Colin Tweedy, chief executive of Arts & Business, added: "At this time of cuts, much more is being asked of the private sector and of volunteers to create a 'big arts society'. Maybe we are set to see a new beginning, when private investment becomes the dominant funding force of UK culture."

But Adrian Babbidge, director of heritage consultancy Egeria, said: "Just as before the recession, more than two-thirds of all private investment goes into London-located museums. And as private giving amounts to no more than 10% of the UK museum sector's total income, compared with the 65% that comes from public funds, the idea that private pockets can substitute for government coffers seems fanciful, for the foreseeable future at least."

Private investment in the cultural sector fell by 3% in 2009-10 to £658m. Business investment shrank by 12% to £144.1m, but funding from trusts and foundations rose by 11% to £154.6m.

Meanwhile, the Office of Tax Simplification will consider a number of new initiatives that relate to museums as part of its review of tax reliefs.

Private treaty sales and the Acceptance in Lieu scheme will come under the remit of the planned review although it is understood that there is no intention to change the latter.

New museums warned over long-term viability

Regional museums told to reinvent themselves to sustain income levels

Gareth Harris

A crop of regional museums is set to open across the country in the next few months, but one museum director has struck a note of caution about the ongoing running costs of institutions such as the Hepworth Wakefield, Turner Contemporary in Margate and Firstsite in Colchester.

Stephen Snoddy, director of the New Art Gallery Walsall, said: "After 18 months, a new venue needs to relaunch itself, so that visitor figures do not dramatically drop after the opening success, and income levels do not fall. It would be imprudent to budget for more than 15% of gross turnover from earned income."

Annual running costs at the Turner Contemporary, which opens next month, will be about £2.2m a year. A spokeswoman said that 85% of this would be funded by Kent County Council and Arts Council England (ACE), with 15% generated through commercial opportunities.

The 5,000sq m Hepworth Wakefield in Yorkshire, which will be the largest purpose-built exhibition space outside London when it opens in May, is also relying on ACE funding.

Hepworth Wakefield: has applied to ACE's national portfolio funding programme

It has applied to ACE's national portfolio funding programme, which replaces its regular funding scheme, and expects to hear the outcome this month.

The gallery's annual running costs will be about £2.5m, which will be met by a mix of private and public financing, with Wakefield council a principal funder.

The gallery received £64,844 from ACE in 2011-12. "It will need a minimum of £800,000 of ACE revenue funding or 40% of annual turnover, aligned with a guaranteed long-term Wakefield council financial commitment," said Snoddy.

Meanwhile, Firstsite, a contemporary-art venue opening in Colchester in September, will be 50% funded by Essex County Council and Colchester Borough Council. It aims to raise the remainder through commercial sources.

M Shed, Bristol's new flagship museum which opens in June, will explore the city's history from prehistoric times to the 21st century.

"It will be funded through the core Bristol City Council budget and the Renaissance business plan for the transition year 2011-12," said Julie Finch, director of Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives.

She added that M Shed had set out key areas for income generation based primarily on retail, corporate hire and catering activities.

On the national museums front, operating costs for the £72m Museum of Liverpool, which opens in July, will be met through grant-in-aid funding from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

National Museums Liverpool will receive £20.5m from 2011-12, reduced to £19.7m in 2014-15, to cover the running costs of its eight sites, including the Museum of Liverpool.

Henley to carry out cultural education review

Classic FM boss looks at how to boost learning

Rebecca Atkinson

Culture minister Ed Vaizey has commissioned Darren Henley to carry out a review of cultural education.

Speaking at the Arts Council England State of the Arts conference, Vaizey said the managing director of Classic FM would carry out a review "to look at the best way of ensuring that our children have access to a solid cultural education, bringing together the range of opportunities available in the arts, heritage, film and museums".

A timetable for the review has yet to be confirmed.

Henley recently delivered a report on music education, which recommended that schools should provide children with a broad music education, including the chance for all pupils to learn to play an instrument. Education secretary Michael Gove said £82.5m would be given to music education in England for the next financial year – the same amount in cash terms as last year.

Ed Vaizey has commissioned Darren Henley to undertake the review

Meanwhile, the Southbank Centre and King's College London have teamed up to launch the first master's programme in education in arts and cultural settings, which will be delivered from September 2011.

In brief

Welsh recommendations
The National Assembly for Wales' cross-party Communities and Culture Committee has proposed that the Welsh government introduces a statutory duty requiring local authorities to support cultural experiences in their areas. It is one of several recommendations in a new report, the Accessibility of Arts and Cultural events in Wales.

Mental-health report

A report highlighting how museums help raise awareness of mental-health issues has been published by Leicestershire County Council's Open Museum service. The research, entitled Opening Minds: Mental Health, Creativity and the Open Museum, focuses on community projects such as the Not What It Seems touring display of artworks, created by participants who use mental-health services in Loughborough.

Seed fund for digital plan
Culture minister Ed Vaizey has unveiled plans to set up a seed fund for exploring ways of using digital technology across the cultural sector. Arts Council England and the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts will draw up proposals for a scheme to support the project.

New HLF guidelines
English Heritage has published guidelines for local authorities seeking to transfer the ownership of historic buildings and monuments to community-based organisations. Pillars of the Community: the Transfer of Local Authority Heritage Assets examines financial and regulatory issues.
http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/publications/pillars-of-the-community-summary/

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Council votes on 15% cut to Museums Sheffield budget

£328,000 cut would make loss of jobs at trust unavoidable

Patrick Steel

Sheffield council will vote this month on proposals to reduce the budget for Museums Sheffield by £328,000 – nearly 15% of its existing budget.

Sandra Newton, Museums Sheffield's chair of trustees, said: "If the proposal is voted through, it would mean looking root and branch at our provision of services. It cannot fail to have an impact.

"We are still in discussions with the council over the outcome, but we are looking at minimising the impact on people and services."

However, she added that she could not see how the trust could take on cuts of that size without a reduction in posts.

"We are exploring all the options, but we have to be clear about the practicalities for us as a trust, and we have to balance the books," said Newton.

A council spokesman said Museums Sheffield had not been singled out, and that proposals had been put forward to reduce all council grants to trusts.

"The reduction in funding is as a result of a reduced government grant to the local authority and we are looking at bridging an £80m funding gap in 2011-12," he said.

"Museums Sheffield has been asked, as part of the proposals, to find savings of £328,000 next year from its £2.3m grant.

"The council and Museums Sheffield have been in discussion about how this could be achieved, and these discussions are ongoing."

The proposals follow an independent financial review commissioned by the council last year that concluded that the museum service was underfunded and in need of recapitalisation. This led to a one-off council payment of £190,000 to the trust in 2010-11.

Museums Sheffield also suffered a £170,000 budget cut last year, leading to reduced pay and hours for the trust's 110 employees across its Millennium Gallery, Weston Park, Graves Gallery and Bishops' House sites.

The budget proposals will be voted on at a council meeting on 4 March.

Staff at the Graves Gallery were forced to accept shorter hours and lower pay last year

Park Pharmacy Trust told to vacate its HQ

Council ultimatum over unpaid £58,000 legal bill

Patrick Steel

An ongoing dispute between Plymouth City Council and the Park Pharmacy Trust over a £58,000 legal bill has led the council to demand that the trust vacate its headquarters and hand over its collections.

Julie Rundle, a senior lawyer at the council, wrote to the trust's chairwoman, Jan Knight, at the start of last month stating that if the trust handed over its assets and paid the council's fees for the bailiff, then the outstanding costs would be waived.

The letter warned that a failure to comply could result in the seizure of the collection and further enforcement action.

In her response, Knight wrote: "Your suggestion . . . is a winding-up order for the Park Pharmacy Trust because without our collections and headquarters, we are no longer able to carry out our legal responsibilities as a registered charity."

Knight's response, which the council was considering as Museums Journal went to press, also stated that the trust would not be wound up without assurances over the future of its Thorn Park Lodge base and its collections.

The dispute came about after the trust took the council to judicial review in 2006 over a decision to grant planning permission to build four terraced houses in the garden of Thorn Park Lodge.

The trust lost and was ordered by the court to pay the council's legal costs.

The Park Pharmacy Trust has been told to hand its collection over to Plymouth City Council

Finds reported to PAS up 39%

Increase attributed to treasure hoard publicity

Simon Stephens

The Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS), which is to be managed directly by the British Museum from next month, is dealing with a sharp increase in the number of archaeological finds.

The number of finds recorded rose 36% last year to 90,029. The number reported under the Treasure Act rose 10% to 859.

PAS head Roger Bland said the rise was probably the result of greater awareness of the need to report finds, following the publicity generated by the Staffordshire and Frome hoards.

Human rights conference

Delegate prices based on a country's GDP

Gareth Harris

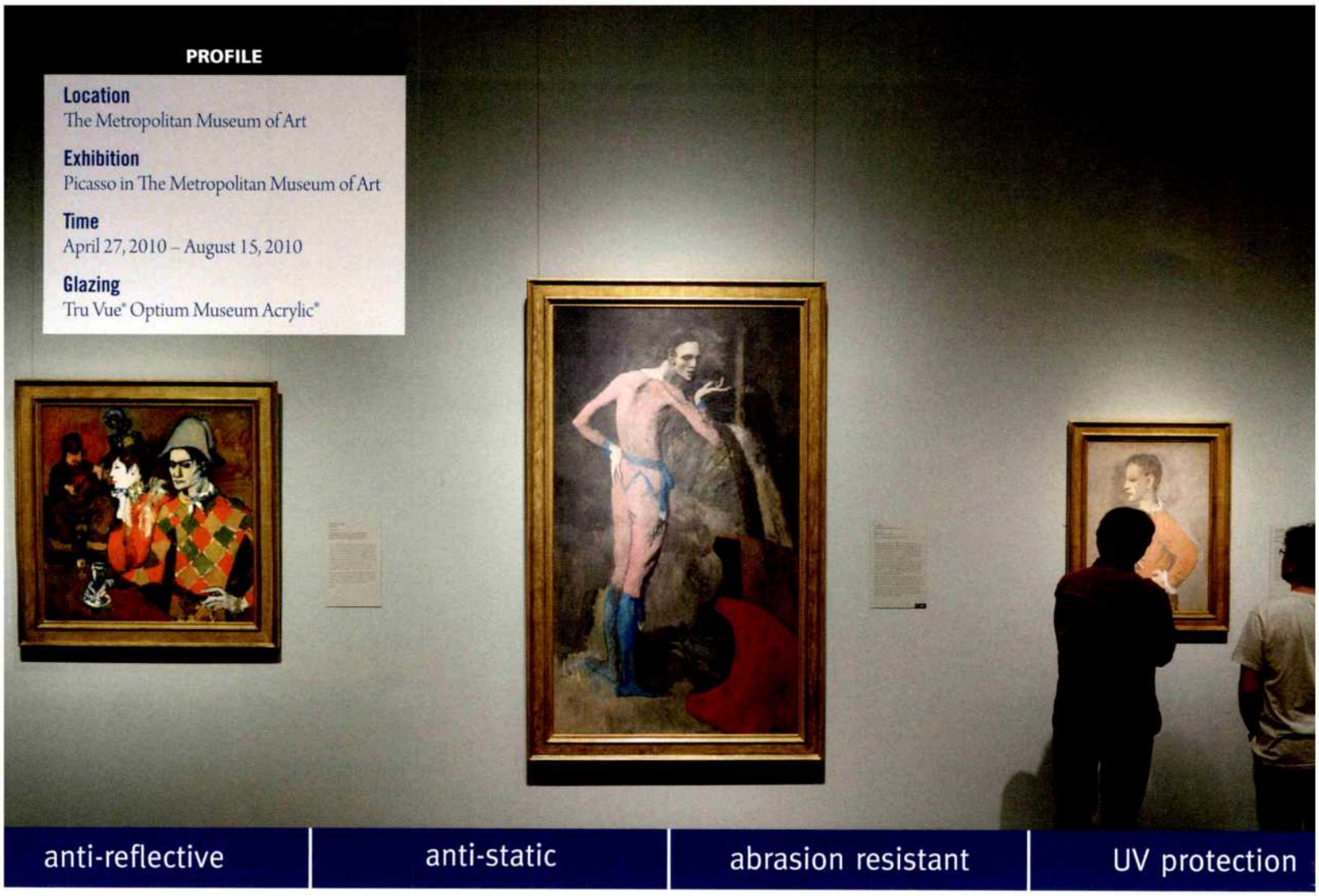
Delegates attending the second international conference organised by the Federation of International Human Rights Museums (FIHRM) at Liverpool's International Slavery Museum in October) will pay a registration fee based on their country of origin.

"The FIHRM has introduced a conference fee to reflect various national economies' contributory capacity," read a statement.

Payment has been structured in line with the International Council of Museums classification of countries, based on their Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita.

Delegates from 36 countries with an average GDP per capita of €22,120, including the UK, will pay a £100 fee. Otherwise, registration is free.

www.fihrm.org



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Cross border: 150 works by John Piper go on display at three venues in Kent and Sussex

A major retrospective of work by John Piper will be on show at three venues in south east England over the next three months. John Piper in Kent and Sussex is on display at the Mascalls Gallery, Paddock Wood; Scotney Castle, Lamberhurst; and Tunbridge Wells Museum and Art Gallery from 9 March 21 May. All three venues will be presenting previously unseen works by the artist and all the works are of places or commissions in Kent and Sussex. Piper was born in Epsom, Surrey, in 1903. He died in 1992.

Scottish Executive slashes acquisitions fund in half

Anger over lack of consultation on cuts

Geraldine Kendall

The Scottish Executive has cut the National Fund for Acquisitions (NFA) by 50%.

The fund, which is administrated by National Museums Scotland (NMS), offers £200,000 a year to help museums and galleries buy objects for their collections.

The amount has remained static since 1996, meaning its value has dropped significantly in real terms.

NMS director Gordon Rintoul said the cut would have a significant impact on museums and galleries.

"The NFA is one of the few funding sources by which regional museums, galleries, libraries and archives can grow their collections to maintain Scotland's cultural heritage for this and future generations," he added.

Rintoul has written to museums urging them to protest to the Scottish Executive about the cut.

In 2009-10, the fund awarded 83 grants totalling £203,783 that, along with matched funding from bodies such as the Heritage Lottery Fund, enabled museums to invest £803,000 in collections.

The Gallery of Modern Art in Glasgow received money from the NFA to purchase Jim Lambie's Seven and Seven Is in 2009

Among the institutions that benefited were the Gallery of Modern Art in Glasgow, which bought Jim Lambie's sculpture, Seven and Seven Is.

Speaking on behalf of the Scottish Museums Federation, Scottish Mining Museum director Rowan Julie Brown said: "Many museums have no other source of income to support purchases, and NFA approval adds an air of legitimacy that helps staff make the case for additional matched funding."

Museums Association director Mark Taylor said: "To arbitrarily slash the NFA by 50% with no consultation shows an arrogance and lack of understanding of its value that takes the breath away."

Funding news

Watch this space

WeDidThis is the latest website being used by museums and galleries to raise money online, joining initiatives such as JustGiving and Easy Fundraising.

The site, which is a dedicated arts scheme rather than for general fundraising, will officially launch this month. But it is already operational and the **Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art** (Mima) is one of five pilot projects. Mima hopes to raise £15,750 to commission a work by artist Richard Forster, whose first major UK solo show opens at the gallery on 22 July. If the target is reached, the new work will become part of the gallery's collection.

WeDidThis wants to help arts organisations bring their audiences and supporters together to form a **"critical mass" of funders**. Every donation is rewarded with a personalised gift such as access to an artist, discounted tickets or merchandise.

During 2011, WeDidThis hopes to launch more than **50 fundraising projects**, from grassroots artists and organisations to schemes from larger and cultural institutions.

WeDidThis intends to apply for charitable status and will **reinvest any profits into the arts**. The site takes a 5% cut if the fundraising campaign is successful and charges a small membership fee.

As Museums Journal went to press, Mima had raised £400 of its £15,750 target, with 64 days to go.

The latest Museum Practice Online focuses on web fundraising and advises that museums should look at medium- to long-term gains, rather than expecting great results in the short term.

www.museumsassociation.org/museum-practice/online-fundraising
http://wedidthis.org.uk/

Simon Stephens

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NMDC in consultation on changing its membership

Members canvassed as to whether body should admit new Renaissance core museums

Patrick Steel

The National Museum Directors' Conference (NMDC) is consulting members on its future remit and membership, as part of a wider strategy review.

Museums Journal understands that one of the key questions in the review is whether the NMDC should represent just national museums, all directly government-funded museums, or whether it should expand to cover the new Renaissance core museums or all of the UK's major publicly funded museums.

Several museum directors said that they were opposed to the expansion of the organisation, with one saying that membership should be restricted to those museums funded directly by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums is a member of the NMDC

There was also opposition to the NMDC playing a wider role in representing the whole sector.

National Museums Liverpool director David Fleming said: "My personal view is that the NMDC cannot speak for the whole sector, but this strategy is an opportunity to forge productive and respectful relationships with the rest of the sector.

"There is also a big challenge for the Museums Association and the federations, in this respect."

Iain Watson, the director of Tyne and Wear Museums, emphasised the importance of working with other bodies.

"I think it is important that the NMDC is UK-wide and that it can be a voice of the larger museums alongside other bodies, in particular the Museums Association, the Association of Independent Museums and Arts Council England."

Lizzie Glithero-West, the NMDC's head of strategy and delivery, said: "I am discussing our future strategy with our members and, following that, will also talk to a number of our stakeholders. There is nothing to report at present."

Art Fund Prize final 10

Long list is mix of local and national museums

Gareth Harris

Ten museums are in the running to win the 2011 Art Fund Prize.

They are the British Museum, Victoria and Albert Museum and Leighton House in London; Hertford Museum; Oriel Mostyn Gallery, Llandudno; People's History Museum, Manchester; Polar Museum, University of Cambridge; Robert Burns Birthplace Museum, Alloway; Roman Baths Museum, Bath; and Yorkshire Museum, York.

A shortlist of four museums will be announced on 19 May, while the £100,000 cash prize will be awarded to the winning institution on 15 June.

Former Tory MP Michael Portillo chairs the judging panel, which includes Guardian journalist Charlotte Higgins, artist Jeremy Deller and museum consultant Kathy Gee.

The public can vote at *www.artfundprize.org.uk*

World news digest

Australia: Staff at the Queensland Art Gallery and Gallery of Modern Art were forced to rescue works as the Queensland capital of Brisbane succumbed to the worst floods seen in the state since 1974. Objects at the Queensland Art Gallery were moved to top-floor storage areas while a disaster-management team occupied the building.

Egypt: Zahi Hawass, Egypt's minister of antiquities, said 70 artefacts were vandalised during anti-government protests at the Egyptian National Museum in Cairo, and eight objects, including a gilded wooden statue of Tutankhamun, were missing. The damage was caused by a group of 10 intruders breaking into the building.

France: A court has ordered that building work is halted on a new private art museum nearing completion in the west of Paris. The gallery, designed by Frank Gehry, will house the contemporary art collection of French magnate Bernard Arnault, who owns Louis Vuitton. The judge ruled that the centre had been built too near an asphalt road deemed a public right of way.

Italy: An Italian museum director has written to the German chancellor Angela Merkel, asking for asylum. Antonio Manfredi, director of the Contemporary Art Museum in Casoria, near Naples, said he was fed up with mafia threats and state neglect of cultural heritage. "If she gives me asylum, I'm going to pack my bags and move to Germany with my staff and the museum's entire collection of 1,000 works," said Manfredi.

US: A museum housing the world's second-largest collection of works by Salvador Dali has opened in St Petersburg, Florida. The $36m museum houses the collection built up by Eleanor and Reynolds Morse, which includes 96 paintings. The new facility replaces the city's original Dali museum, which opened in 1982. All the art is displayed on the third floor of the building to protect it from hurricane-induced flooding.

The new Salvador Dali Museum in St Petersburg

US: The former director of the Rose Art Museum at Brandeis University, Michael Rush, has been appointed founding director of the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum at Michigan State University. The Michigan museum is set to open in spring 2012 with a gift of $28m from the Broads, the Los Angles-based philanthropists.

Compiled by Gareth Harris. Seen in Agence France Presse, Discovery News, Daily Telegraph, The Art Newspaper and BBC

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HLF consults over future aims

HLF seeks advice on spending priorities from 2013 onwards

Simon Stephens

At a time when many museums and galleries are having to do more with less, it's encouraging that the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) is doing more with more.

A combination of strong sales of lottery tickets, increased income once the lottery has paid its share of costs to the 2012 Olympics, and the government upping the share of lottery money going to heritage, has meant the HLF will have an annual awards budget of about £300m from 2013 onwards, up from £205m for 2010-11. And it has just launched a consultation on how it should spend this enlarged budget.

It all sounds like great news but it's not that simple. The rise in HLF money has to be seen in the context of sharp falls in the overall amount of money coming into heritage. HLF chairwoman Jenny Abramsky points out in her introduction to the consultation that government spending cuts "will mean there will be around £700m a year less in public investment in heritage across the UK during the next five years".

The HLF wants to find out what heritage organisations and the public think its priorities should be in a financial environment where other sources of public investment are becoming increasingly scarce.

The HLF consultation is a wide one and opens up lots of new areas that the HLF could start funding. These include more support for acquisitions; philanthropy; digital initiatives; skills; and addressing climate change. The types of organisations that the HLF funds are fairly broad, with museums fighting for funding alongside libraries, archives, historic buildings, monuments, parks and places of worship.

JAMES BRITTAIN

The No.1 Smithery at the Historic Dockyard, Chatham, opened last year and is among the many high-profile capital projects that the HLF has backed

There are lots of hungry mouths to feed and presumably each sector will make a persuasive case for more funding. But they can't all be big winners.

The difficult decisions the HLF has to make are not only about which types of heritage to fund. There is also the question of how to balance support for past projects with investing in future schemes.

Anticipating the tough times ahead, one of the questions in the consultation asks whether the HLF should give more priority to ensuring the financial stability of organisations that have already received lottery money. If the answer is yes, how would it do this?

It's unthinkable that the HLF is going to become like Arts Council England, which has range of regularly funded organisations that it supports with core funding. But the consultation does mention endowments, which the HLF is already permitted to fund, although it has done so rarely in the past (the National Trust's Tyntesfield near Bristol is one example) as they need substantial amounts to have a material effect on running costs. In 2009, the National Gallery of Art in Washington, for example, had an endowment of just under $400m that covered about 10% of its expenditure.

The issue of supporting operating costs is tricky. It could be a big drain on resources but on the other hand the HLF wouldn't want one of its high-profile projects to go to the wall.

There is a lot in the HLF consultation that will appeal to museums and galleries.

One question asks if there should be a simplified approach to grants under £10,000 and this will surely be supported. There is also a plan to create a single round application for grants from £10,000 to between £50,000 and £200,000.

For larger grants (over £50,000), the HLF says it has already reduced the amount of work that needs to done for a first-round applications and has lowered the amount of partnership funding required. But some in museums feel that making an application for a larger grant is too onerous for small organisations, although others feel the paperwork is about right for the amounts of money on offer.

Another welcome proposal is to fund projects that are purely digital for the first time. (Museums Journal is hosting a roundtable on digital innovation in partnership with the Heritage Lottery Fund, and the results will be published in April.)

More support for acquisitions is also on the agenda. The consultation points to Collecting Cultures, a one-off scheme launched in 2007 to support strategic collections development programmes. It offered grants of £50,000-£200,000 and was popular among the 22 museums that took part, as once they were given the money they had the freedom to go ahead and make acquisitions rather than seek HLF approval for each one.

The consultation also talks about whether it should do more to solicit applications to focus funding on strategic priorities. But some in the sector feel that it is not the organisation's role to pick and choose what areas to fund.

Overall, concerns centre on whether the HLF will spread itself too thinly. The consultation suggests that the organisation should change its three strategic aims of conservation, participation and learning to the single aim of "making a positive and lasting difference for heritage and people". This is a very broad remit.

Whatever happens with the consultation's results, the HLF will continue to be important for museums. It's difficult to imagine the sector without the £4.5bn that the HLF has invested in the whole of UK heritage, which has supported more than 30,000 projects.

The deadline for contributions to the HLF consultation is 26 April. www.hlf.org.uk

HLF funding to March 2010

	Value (£m)	% of total
Historic buildings and monuments	1,649.03	36.7
Industrial maritime and transport	370.91	8.2
Intangible heritage (oral history, etc)	214.91	4.8
Land and biodiversity (including parks)	935.53	20.8
Museums libraries archives and collections	1,326.70	29.5

Source HLF

Who should take the lead in cultural strategy?

David Anderson

Our sector is experiencing radical change of a kind we have not seen for decades. The scything down of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council has left a strategic and operational gap that Arts Council England (ACE), as a multi-sector agency, cannot easily fill. And the bonfire of the quangos means that local museums have less practical support and less opportunity to speak and be heard nationally.

The cuts have accelerated a growing division between national and non-national museums. National museums are suffering but many non-nationals will fare much worse, to the point where some may not survive and some may do so only in reduced form.

The allocation of public funding tells only part of the story. The bulk of sponsorship and private giving goes to a small number of major institutions in London. These disparities of wealth across the UK in museums, as in many areas of society, are becoming ever more extreme.

There is also a widening gap, in cultural policy and practice, between England, and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The latest example is the proposal by the British Museum to reduce funding for Wales for the Portable Antiquities Scheme by 90% from April 2012, in order to protect funding for its English beneficiaries.

We need, then, to decide how we will run ourselves. What will be the role of bodies such as the Museums Association (MA), the core museums, the federations and the National Museum Directors' Conference (NMDC)? One of the key issues is leadership. Will it become yet more centralised and London-centric? It would be easy for money, power and access to ministers in London to translate into assumed leadership of museums, but is this really what the sector needs?

There is an alternative, more democratic model that recognises the need for strong local leadership. The English regions have distinct identities. When you are in Yorkshire or the south-west, you know it.

The core museums and federations have a much closer understanding of the needs of their local audiences and museums than London-based bodies. The federations and the MA are accountable to a broad base of museums and museum professionals in a way that ACE and NMDC were never designed to be – their strengths lie elsewhere.

It is now time for the MA and NMDC to recognise that, in terms of governance, the United Kingdom has ceased to exist as a cultural entity. Culture is a devolved responsibility, but our professional bodies have yet to adapt to this new reality.

Each of the four nations (except, significantly, England) has its own museum or cultural strategy. There may be value in UK-wide initiatives, but these can only be developed through mutual agreement and cannot, in future, be assumed.

The same principle could be applied to regional initiatives in England. The difficulty of the top-down model as operated by some major museums is that it tends to meet the needs of the provider rather than the presumed beneficiaries. Local museums often work more closely with their communities, and have a more socially inclusive agenda.

It is important that future development of strategy, and control of the funding that supports it, should lie, as far as possible, with regions (and nations) through the leadership of the core museums and federations. Pan-national organisations – and particularly the MA – may have a role to play, but only within a framework of accountability.

David Anderson is the director general of Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales

The diary of a national museum director *Part Ten*

I attended a special session of national museum directors yesterday. We met in the personal rooms of one of our number, a palatial space in the Abyssinian style, its walls glittering with gold-leaf and precious stones as befits the splendour of the incumbent.

Everything is run according to a strict protocol. The servants, dressed and masked as Egyptian gods, carry in the champagne and truffles that are served throughout the meeting. We then entered, in order of rank. Of course, because I have no collections yet, I was last.

There was only one item on the agenda, the trial of a local museum director. When we were all made comfortable and refreshed, the accused was brought forth by Anubis and Ra and tied to a chair. The charge was insubordination.

Several witnesses were called from among our ranks. One had heard the accused say that Sir N's tie looked as though it had been used for strangling chickens. Another had seen the accused making faces, and whispering "no surprises there", when it was announced that Sir M's museum had been shortlisted for a prestigious award.

Our verdict was swift and unanimous. The wretched man was pronounced guilty. His punishment was the most terrible we could apply: his museum must host the "Unto Those That Have: Unwanted Gifts From The Royal Wedding" exhibition from the Royal Collection in 2012.

When he heard this, he fell to his knees. "No, not that," he pleaded, "anything but that." But it was too late for remorse. He was dragged away, weeping piteously.

PAUL BOMMER

Why flaws in the export system need to be fixed

Stephen Deuchar

If you managed to save up to buy a new object for your collection, only to be told it's not actually for sale, how would you feel? Bemused? Angry? This was the situation that faced the National Portrait Gallery (NPG) and the Burrell Collection just before Christmas.

Between them they had raised over £950,000 to secure two important export-stopped works of art, and in both cases the owners changed their minds at the last minute and decided not to sell.

The museums wasted time and money in putting together grant applications (including to the Art Fund) and in leading public appeals, only to find the money had to be returned to donors. Rightly, members of the public were dismayed. (Luckily for the NPG, good relations between director Sandy Nairne and the vendor mean that the painting is now on a five-year loan to the gallery, and plans, including a tour, are able to go ahead.)

This now recurring situation is worrying. Museums are missing out on important objects; resources are being wasted; and the goodwill of the public is being stretched to breaking point.

You might remember the now-infamous case of Sir Joshua Reynolds' Portrait of Omai. The owner changed his mind about selling on the eve of Tate's announcement that the £12.5m asking price had been raised. Such cases make a mockery of the system.

The UK's system for reviewing the export of works of art was set up in the 1950s, is widely admired and has generally worked very well, identifying nationally important objects heading abroad and allowing time for museums to acquire them.

We need preserve it – but also to modernise it. The Art Fund is regularly asked to help fund export-stopped works of art, but we and the museums we support have been continually frustrated by problems and glitches that could so easily be avoided.

It is vital that the public interest is deemed a higher priority than the wishes of licence applicants, and there must be greater transparency in the workings of the committee. There should be a more rigorous interrogation of sales, price agreements, and provenance, and a commitment to obtaining full paperwork in relation to the commercial aspects of each case. Without these reforms museums and funding bodies will lose confidence in the system.

There is a simple solution to the problem of export applicants changing their mind about selling: instead of relying on verbal undertakings, introduce, from the beginning of the process, a binding agreement that they must sell the object should a museum raise the matching price. This would provide clarity, certainty and a genuine opportunity to retain significant works in the UK. We have put a proposal to the department for culture that we and a number of museums believe would be workable. It is now being reviewed.

Stephen Deuchar is the director of the Art Fund

The insider

Sex-up your displays to win new audiences

Maev Kennedy

I admit it's going to be challenging for the National Coal Mining Museum for England and the National Slate Museum in Llanberis but, with a little imagination, I think most museums are well placed to follow the lead, the dazzlingly obvious path out of the doldrums, set by the Natural History Museum's Sexual Nature exhibition.

Sheffield Industrial Museums Trust already boasts of its boring lathe and massive tilt hammer, and the potential for the Cumberland Pencil Museum, which displays a 7.9 metre pencil (and must therefore presumably have the most lead in its pencil in the world), and Leicester's National Space Centre with its 42m tower, are obvious.

The National Trust, following its new policy that all its properties should look slightly slobbered on by labradors rather than box fresh from the white gloves of the conservation department, is already a long way down the road, with judicious scatterings of night shirts and silky negligees starting to appear on the four posters. Inviting visitors to fling back the covers and come in for a romp is the obvious next step.

Coventry Transport Museum is already bang on the button getting King George VI's Daimler out of store for temporary display – probably too much to hope that it has a slightly stuttering exhaust – but if hiring Colin Firth to lounge around in a wet shirt is beyond the budget, it should surely be possible to bring in a Helen Bonham Carter lookalike to drape herself over the bonnet.

Whichever display approach is chosen, it is essential to place warning notices in the largest typeface you can find, both in the galleries and on the website, possibly noting that medically trained staff are on hand in case any visitor should be shocked into collapse.

This is where the Natural History Museum has been too timid in its one-liner: "This exhibition contains frank information and imagery about sex" – though it's certainly a smart touch if you then go on to offer family discounts and free admission to children "aged three and under".

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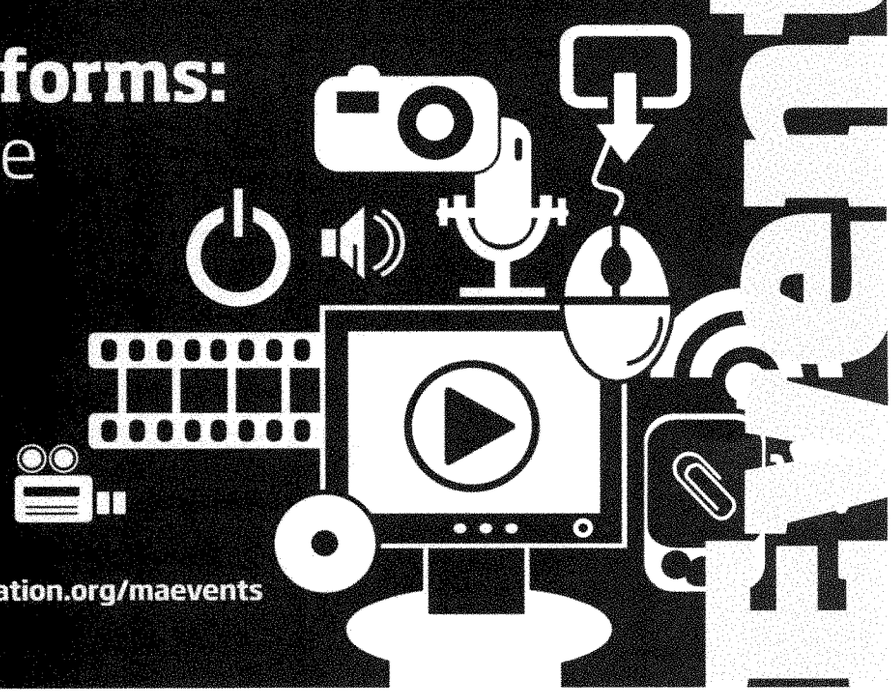

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Are tiered entry prices a way forward for museums?

Tom Schuller

Last year I chaired a small group set up by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council to think about the future of museums. It was a good mix of museum expertise and outsider viewpoints. For me, as a lay person who has always been in the habit of visiting museums but had never looked at them other than in my role as a consumer, it was a fascinating exercise which has certainly changed for ever my way of experiencing museums.

My colleagues were emphatic that we should keep any output to a minimalist shape, so we confined our conclusions to a three-page report. They are options for moving towards museums as part of the knowledge economy. But here I want to air one off-message proposal, not discussed with any of my colleagues on the Leading Museums group.

I've wrestled with the rationing issue for some time. I remember being the first person into the Alhambra, Spain, at 9am on a Tuesday in February. For a few minutes I and my friends shared the calm atmosphere with a few others. By the time we came out, the place was a cacophony of tourist chatter.

The behaviour of others was no different from that of my friends and myself – there were just many more people. The queue outside was 50 yards long and four wide – and this, remember, was February. For the rest of the day, the atmosphere inside would be completely at odds with its cultural character – and worse I assume as the season develops.

The rationing problem is widespread, and is one of success as more and more people want to get in to see many of our exhibitions. As a result the experience is too often one of crush and rush for everyone. This will only get worse. Price is the obvious means of rationing, and is used somewhat to regulate access to special exhibitions. But prices high enough to significantly limit overall demand go totally against the principle of general accessibility, unacceptably so.

My partial solution is this. Reserve perhaps two sessions per week for tickets whose numbers are limited to, say, half of the normal quota. This means those who buy them will get a proper look at the exhibits, in reasonable peace and quiet. For this they will pay, say, five times the normal price.

But this would give only the rich the chance to enjoy the experience. Indeed; so for each of these sessions, a certain number of tickets, perhaps 10%, should be made available on a lottery basis, for free. So those of us for whom £40 or £50 is too much for a ticket at least have a chance of the experience as it should be. We can keep applying; in one sense, that is a test of how keen we really are.

This is just a barely sketched example of how we might deal with the rationing problem. It's a small part of rethinking the role of museums as part of the cultural economy.

Tom Schuller is the director of Longview and a visiting professor at Birkbeck and the Institute of Education, London

From where I'm standing

When sponsorship adds insult to injury

Felicity Heywood

Aboriginal voices in a new film should get museums thinking about their social responsibility.

Our Generation had its UK preview last month at the Royal Geographical Society in London and maps the maltreatment meted out to the indigenous peoples of Australia by first the British and then what became the Australian administration.

It charts the horrifying situation of the Yolngu people of Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory. They are one of the few Aboriginal groups who have refused to sign their land over to the government in exchange for improved living conditions. As a consequence of failing to give into such bribery they are disempowered from making decisions about their lives.

The film outlines the historical context but more importantly we directly hear the voices of the people who eloquently explain why the land is core to their way of life.

The film made me think about areas some museums find difficult to address. Should museums with artefacts hailing from indigenous people show their social responsibility to the people today, and should museums accept sponsorship from corporations that have shown a lack of respect for people and the environment?

Interestingly, the gasp from the audience didn't come from any of the disturbing film footage. Rather it came when Australian commentator Germaine Greer (invited onto the panel following the film) revealed that the British Museum's Australia season, which starts next month and has a strand focusing on landscapes, is sponsored by the mining company Rio Tinto.

Greer explained the track-record of the Anglo-Australian company in being privy to displacing people to mine for uranium. She suggested taking images of landscapes after Rio Tinto intervention and projecting them on the walls throughout Bloomsbury.

What I would hope is that the museum takes it social responsibility seriously and tells the story of the current threat to the culture, language and health of the oldest living human culture on earth.

Sometimes you have to put your dreams on hold

I am writing in response to the letter entitled "You can close our museums but you can't take our dreams" (*Museums Journal February 2011, p20*).

To look uncompromisingly for work in the museum sector while in the midst of the worst economic recession since the second world war is admirable. But also, I think, arrogant. I presume you are lucky enough to have the kind of support network in place that allows you to do this. To wait it out, as long as it takes.

I have spent, on and off, over three years volunteering in different museums and galleries, as well as gaining an MA in the area. Of course unpaid work is only sustainable for so long (don't even get me started on the exploitation of unpaid graduate internships). I took a job in June 2009, albeit in the arts, not in the museum sector.

After a year and a half, in October last year, I made the brave (or stupid) decision to refocus my career back into the museum world, and have spent three extremely disheartening and frustrating months unemployed.

I gave myself this deadline as a realistic amount of time before I would have no choice but to compromise again. I am lucky to have since found a job within the sphere of the museum sector. However, this is still not exactly where I want to be and nor is it full-time.

The museum sector is facing huge hardship over the next few years, but so are other industries. Many people across many different industries are having to compromise in order to survive, and it is not weakness that forces it, but necessity.

It is pure arrogance to suggest that some people might be less passionate about their work in museums than others if they are forced into the position where they have to take "any crappy job" to survive.

Yes, I agree, passionate and committed individuals are integral to the success of the museum industry, and I, more than anyone, am a subscriber to the mantra of "follow your dreams", but sometimes it is just not economically or mentally sustainable to "keep going", and people should not be made to feel inferior for not doing so.

Indeed it is strength of character which allows someone to have the courage to put dreams on hold until they are more viable or at least more practical economically. Pride may prevent you from wanting to take a "crappy job" but common sense should make you see that somewhere along the line you may have no choice but to compromise.

Name and address supplied

Stand up and be counted

I read and watch on a daily basis the increasing amounts of cuts in funding for our heritage and arts budget. This forces museums to close and makes staff redundant, such as the writer last month (*Museums Journal February 2011, p20*).

This is damaging to our culture immediately, in that museums are closed and the stories of those that they represent are lost. It can also mean that the running is passed to volunteers who, while well meaning, do not have the training to ensure the correct practices in handling and storing valuable artefacts and ensuring that they are properly looked after.

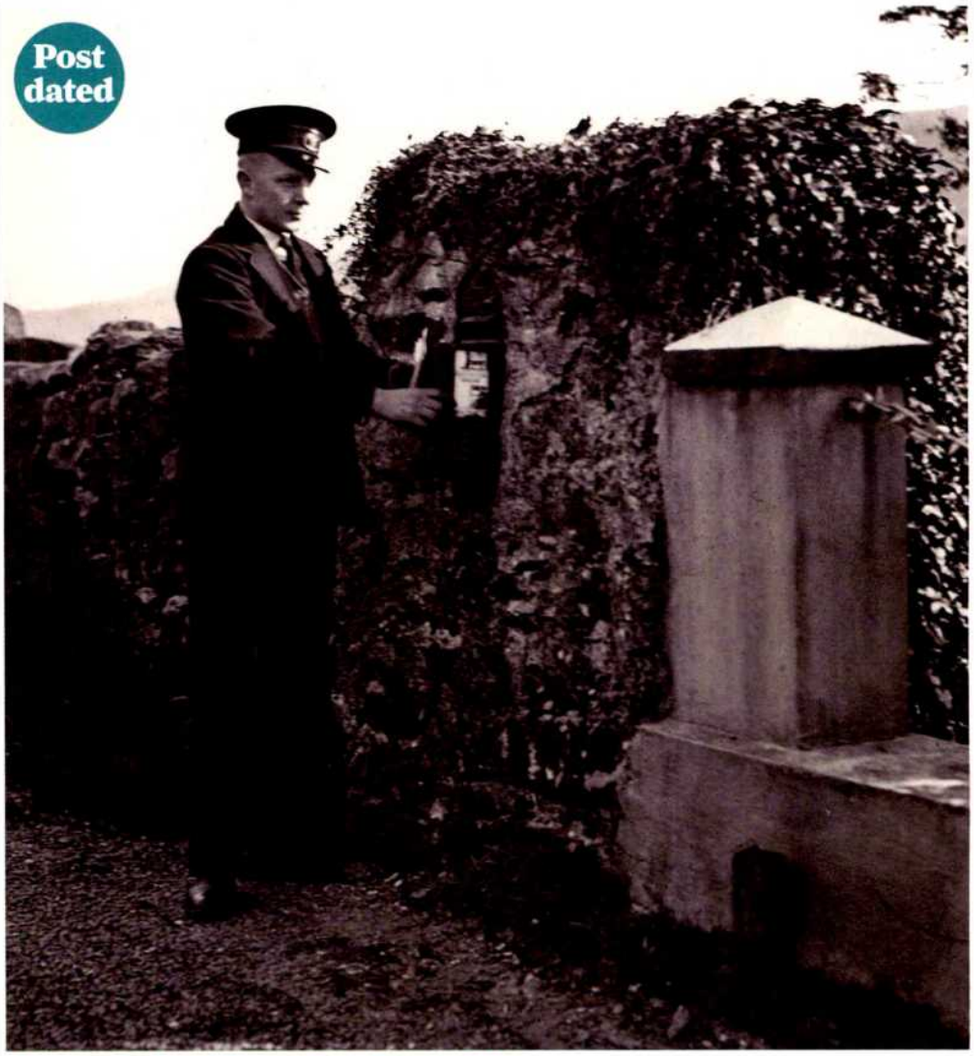
It also puts at risk the future of the industry, with the best and brightest leaving for other countries or simply being put off actually investing in history courses, leaving us facing a world where everyone has a degree in psychology, or other odd subjects.

Despite these clear disadvantages, councils and the government continue to see arts and heritage budgets as soft targets. And the only suggestion the Conservatives can provide is look to trust status and find your own money. Museum staff are trained to look after objects and ensure the smooth running of museums not try and convince Microsoft that it should sponsor their museum.

Despite campaigns to save libraries, forests and science, no one has done this for museums. It seems that there is a lack of coordination or willingness to do this.

I believe we may be required to hold a

Post dated



A postman collecting mail from a wall box in Snowdon, 1934

ROYAL MAIL GROUP LTD/RPMA 2011

national day of strikes where all museums, historic houses and other parts of the heritage industry close their doors to the public.

The concept that history is boring has been destroyed. The success of comedians such as Eddie Izzard, and the Horrible Histories book and TV series show that people do love and care about history. It is the silent inaction of the heritage industry that must now be tackled and a message sent that what is happening cannot continue and that we as a industry don't wish it to.

Jon Roke, MA student in historical studies, Godalming

And thanks go to...

I was delighted to read the review of Havering Museum (*Museums Journal January 2011, p52*). It reflected the community commitment and involvement which is ensuring the success of Havering Museum.

However I would like to acknowledge the contribution of Val Bott, whose role as curatorial consultant was essential in the development of the museum with a community that had never had a museum before.

Havering Museum benefited from Val's extensive experience in creating new museums, which include Brent and Wandsworth. She worked closely with Simon Donoghue, the local studies librarian for the London Borough of Havering, on listing and photographing stored collections, researching objects, images and archives with local connections in other collections, and drafting the storylines, all for the Heritage Lottery Fund application.

She was re-engaged to implement the project – as part of the design team and she researched and wrote the exhibition script, carried out the picture research and planned the content of the showcases and galleries.

So a huge thank you to Val, the design team and all the people who have turned Havering Museum from a dream into a wonderful reality.

Elizabeth Neathey, curator, Havering Museum

In the April issue of Museums Journal

- **Museums Journal roundtable on digital innovation in partnership with the Heritage Lottery Fund**
- **The national question: how do museums shape and reflect national identity?**
- **Interview: Kate Howe, the Cardiff Story**
- **Reviews: Impressionism, National Museum Cardiff; Robert Burns Birthplace Museum, Alloway; Northern Spirit, Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle**
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Vox pop

Should the big society project be abandoned?

Gillian Gear
archivist, Barnet Museum

"I am not actually certain that Cameron's new idea of the big society has been taken up, so how can it be abandoned!

Volunteers who have been putting in hours if not years of work in their community are astounded that anyone can think that a new catch phrase is going to change the pattern of their volunteering. They volunteer because they believe in what they are doing.

Volunteers founded the Barnet Museum. Barnet people provided the archives and objects for the collection. Volunteers provide the manpower to welcome our visitors, give lectures on local topics, research the archives and much more. But as things stand with the cuts it seems the big society won't save Barnet Museum."

Phil Redmond
chairman, National Museums Liverpool

"How can you abandon something you never had? As most people seem to profess an inability to understand the big society, is there not first an obligation to try and figure out what it could be, rather than simply walk away from something we do not, or perhaps do not want to, understand in the present climate?

I suspect it will turn out a bit like art: initially, don't really know what we like until we stumble across it. However, I also suspect any meaningful debate will be drowned out until the understandable cacophony of voices raised against the cuts subsides. There are two separate things here, so I'd prefer not to abandon the principle until we have at least had a decent cultural conversation."

Sarah Staniforth
museums and collections director, National Trust

"No. Since its early days, over 100 years ago, the National Trust has demonstrated how what is now called the big society can work. We believe that working with volunteers, community use of properties and involving local people and now our Going Local agenda, which has put more power with property managers, has created a sustainable business model.

There will always be a need for government to provide a framework of support, but the end goal of diverse sources of income coupled with the involvement of a large number of people who give their time freely will help to compensate for the short-term pain."

Peter Walton *volunteering management project officer, British Association of Friends of Museums*

"The general thrust of the big society, as a politician's idea, seems pretty clear. But how this turkey can be got to fly is perhaps another matter.

Several aspects concern me. One is the possibility, driven by tightened local authority budgets, that some museum staff may be made redundant. In that event there will probably be offers of volunteers to take their places.

If they do, will those museums be accused of replacing their staff with volunteers? But should not such a museum be congratulated on keeping the museum open, particularly if it promises to re-employ professional staff when funding can be restored.

No, don't abandon the project."

Objects such as Adam Ant's stage outfit at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, can add drama to displays

Lost in music

Museums have often struggled to reflect the social and cultural significance of pop music, but this is changing. *Deborah Mulhearn* reports

From the Beatles to Oasis, pop music is one of Britain's biggest cultural success stories, so it's strange that the joys of screaming fans and ear-splitting concerts are rarely seen in museums.

There are a number of reasons for this. For a start, the immediacy and raw emotion of pop music are difficult to capture in traditional museum displays. Also, pop memorabilia is difficult to get hold of, as fans and collectors rarely want to part with that precious signed album or treasured concert poster.

The failure of the £15m National Centre for Popular Music also casts a long shadow. This lottery-funded project opened in Sheffield in 1999 and closed just over a year later after abysmal visitor figures.

And yet a recent nationwide survey of popular music collections, displays and exhibitions has revealed that well over 100 exhibitions featuring popular music and related cultural activities have been mounted in the past 10 years around the UK.

The survey was carried out as part of Collecting and Curating Popular Music Histories, a project being conducted by the Institute of Popular Music at the University of Liverpool. It is supported by the Arts & Humanities Research Council's £5.5m Beyond Text programme, which funds projects looking at how people communicate through performance, sound, images and objects. The key partners are the British Music Experience, Victoria and Albert Museum and National Museums Liverpool.

"We have also been conducting in-depth interviews with curators, conservators and other museum professionals working in education and outreach roles with the aim of sharing practice with museum professionals interested in the subject, and to act as an advocate for the effective use of popular music in museums," says Marion Leonard, senior lecturer in music at the University of Liverpool. "It's early days but we can already say that there is an increasing amount of activity in this area, with museums of different sizes and types putting on shows which engage with popular music in different ways.

"Some of these have focused on well-known artists or offered an overview of particular points in British music history, while others, notably in art galleries rather than museums, have focused on aspects of visual art related to popular music releases or movements," adds Leonard.

Alongside this, popular music has featured in museums ▶

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Beatles memorabilia will be part of the Wondrous Place gallery at the Museum of Liverpool, which is opening later this year

as a way to explore social and urban histories, focusing on aspects of popular music practice and achievement within specific localities rather than the broad themes that a national museum might tackle.

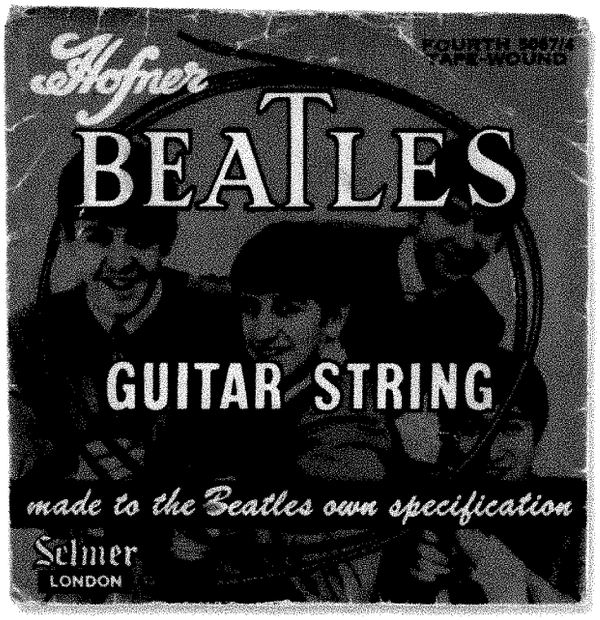
The British Music Experience (BME) at the O2 arena in London is the closest we have to a national museum of pop music. The BME opened in March 2009 and attracted 150,000 visitors in its first year with its state-of-the-art mix of interactive exhibitions and zoned areas where people can dance, sing, play instruments or learn more about the pop music industry. Information and activities are recorded on "smart tickets" that can be accessed later from home using the internet.

"People can see objects, but there's so much more to enjoy – you can mix records, play instruments, learn dance moves, immerse yourself in giant hologram areas," says BME curator Paul Lilley. "It's the depth and level of our interpretation that sets us apart – and how we animate the collection."

A range of commercial sponsors from the Co-operative to Gibson Guitars provide funds, but also content, though many of the pop memorabilia items are loaned from owners, which Lilley admits can be tricky.

"Relying on loans can mean a huge risk for curators and having to incur the expense of frequent display changes," he says. "But the upside is that relationships are built. We've engaged 150 artists, which we wouldn't have done if we already had a collection or we'd bought stuff at auction."

Lilley believes that smaller museums are also able to use these connections. "The importance is in building an army of advocates – from artists and industry supporters to audiences themselves – who are interested in everything you do. You don't want them to come once, you want them to come back, and then spread the word. We have the full support of the UK music industry – it's unheard of to have all the major record labels and trade organisations, who are normally in competition, behind us."



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Pop merchandise

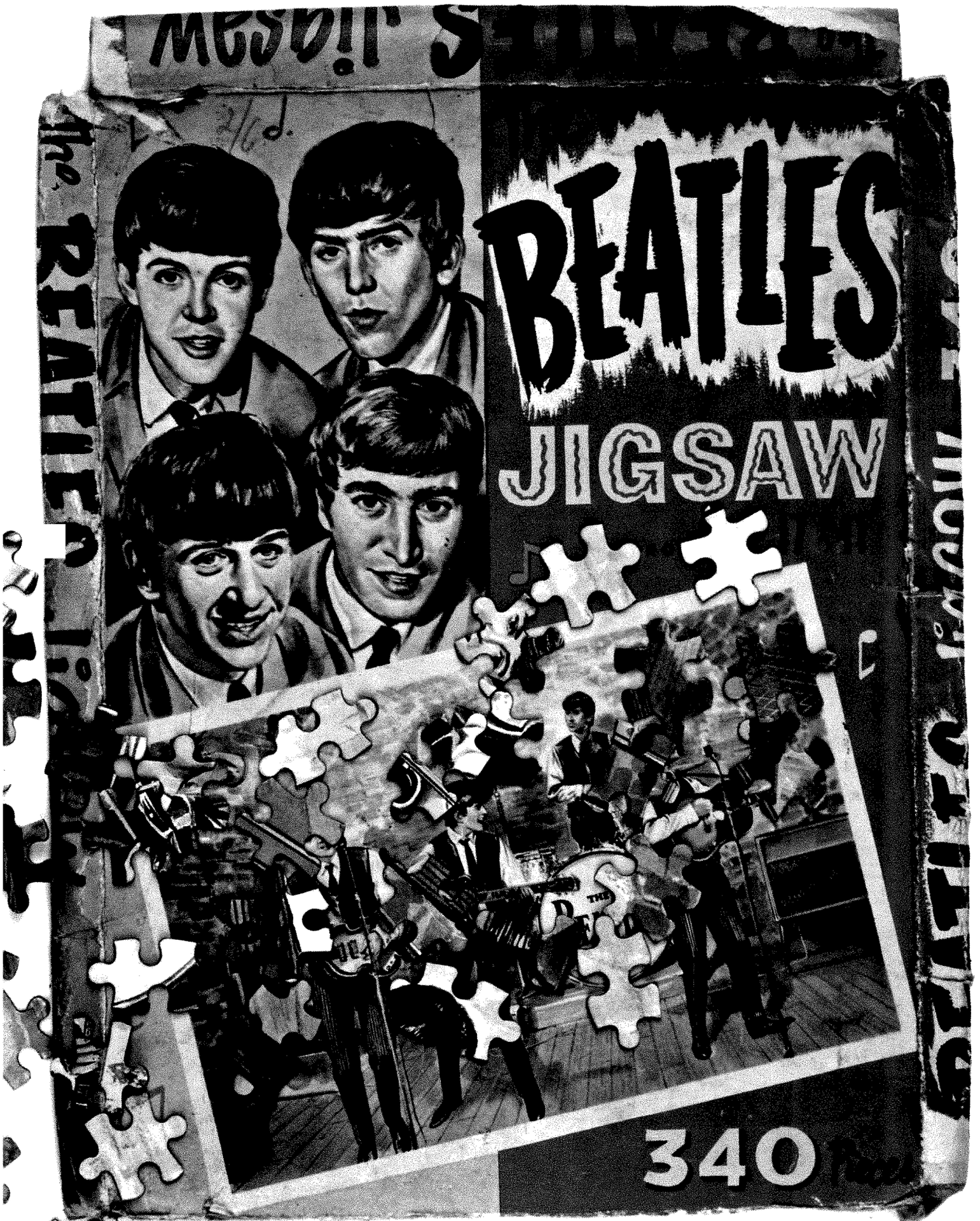
Beyond London, there are many exhilarating stories to tell about British pop music and identifiable audiences to appeal to. This is why it's hard to see how the National Centre for Popular Music could have failed. The consensus is that it took a scattergun approach and, more significantly, failed to connect with the city of Sheffield and its musical heritage.

"You have to move beyond objects in cases," says Paul Gallagher, curator of contemporary collecting at National Museums Liverpool (NML). NML opens its Wondrous Place gallery as part of the Museum of Liverpool this July. A pop music exhibition, Liverpool Sound, is one element of this gallery, telling the story of the city's cultural life. "You can't avoid overlapping the different cultural elements: music, sport, writing, fashion. Popular music is a very visual experience; we use a lot of costume.

"It's an opportunity to engage with music in different ways, and people can dip in and out. We have digital jukeboxes, a karaoke room where people can sing the Liverpool hits, and a pop quiz table interactive which plays video clips," adds Gallagher.

The Beatles' story, for example, is told through the fans. "The vast majority of this is from our own collections and is mainly merchandise, but this is a huge part of the story – how the Beatles phenomenon came about and how they were the first band to push merchandise on a global scale," says Gallagher.

"It could be overwhelming, because Liverpool and pop music are inextricably linked, and because of the sheer amount of stories to tell, so it had to have a chronological ▶


BEATLES
JIGSAW
340

Right: a sleeve from a Lonnie Donegan record at the British Music Experience (BME), London. Below: the BME prides itself on the variety and depth that it offers visitors

element," says Gallagher. "But we wanted to get across the speed with which it all happened, how the Beatles were a band that borrowed and kept moving."

He says objects are central, but it's the story that drives the display. "It has to get under the skin of the city. We use a lot of first-hand quotes, and from these come the excitement. It's the story that's enormous, not the exhibition, and most of all it has to work as a piece of entertainment."

Despite the country's rich musical heritage, Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales (NMW) did not actively collect contemporary music material until 20 years ago.

"We started to add aspects of Welsh industrial life in the 1980s at St Fagans, the museum of traditional Welsh rural folk life. Collecting music items followed logically from that," says Owain Rhys, curator of contemporary life at NMW. "It is difficult, because people didn't want to part with their possessions, so we photographed and recorded material that we considered of significance to Wales. Unless people have duplicates of items, such as vinyl LPs, donating would defeat the object of collecting for them."

In 2009 St Fagans created Pop Peth (Welsh for "everything"), a pop music exhibition curated by people from outside the museum.

"It was a way of accessing material but also of handing responsibility to people who knew the objects and could tell the story from their point of view," Rhys says.

Those invited were a collector who brought posters, badges and Welsh-language ephemera; the editors of a fanzine, who recreated a student bedroom; family-run Spillers Records, which provided signed photographs, promotional material and other pop memorabilia; and a dub reggae band who brought their synthesiser for people to play on.

"We benefited hugely from their enthusiasm and knowledge," says Rhys. "And seeing them setting up their corner created a buzz in the museum as visitors' memories were triggered."

Building a pop music collection at NMW has been slow and painstaking, but relationships have come out of it.

"Museums could work more closely with collectors, and show that they value their collections," says Rhys. "For example, Gari, the collector for the Pop Peth exhibition, collected ticket stubs because no one else did, and for their cultural rather than iconic value."

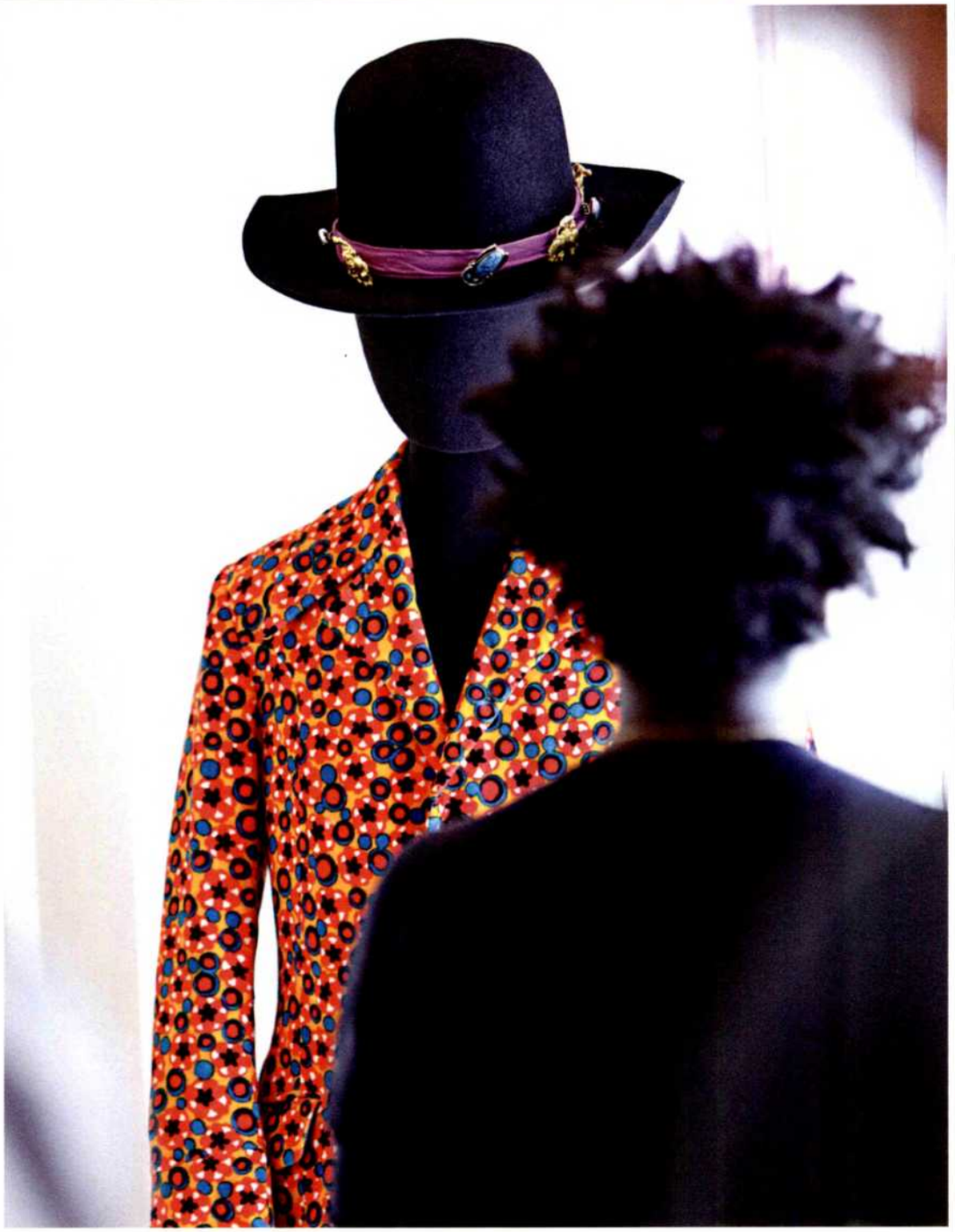
But small items such as ticket stubs can tell a big story, points out Rhys. "We hope that in the future collectors can look at us as a repository for their collections."

Since the exhibition, St Fagans has asked up-and-coming bands to compose contemporary music inspired by items now in the collection, with the results posted on the NMW website.

"It creates new audiences and we are also creating history by capturing the present for the future," says Rhys.

Deborah Mulhearn is a freelance journalist

Purple haze in Mayfair



The rarefied atmosphere of the Handel House Museum in London's Mayfair was rocked for three months last year when it held an exhibition to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the death of American musician Jimi Hendrix, who lived in what today comprise the museum offices.

The 18th-century German composer Frideric Handel resided at 25 Brook Street from 1723 until his death in 1759. Hendrix moved into the top-floor flat of 23 Brook Street in 1968, and lived there for 18 months with his English girlfriend, Kathy Etchingham.

The exhibition, Hendrix in Britain (25 August-7 November 2010), was a huge success, with the museum's usual 1,200 visitors per month swelling to 7,500.

"The exhibition was an opportunity for us to celebrate a very different musical culture," says Sarah Bardwell, the director of the Handel House Museum.

Virtuosity

But there are parallels between Handel and Hendrix, Bardwell points out. "Both were immigrants during exciting decades in London's development – Handel in the 1720s and Hendrix in the 1960s – and both used London to make their mark. And both were brilliant musicians, Hendrix on guitar, Handel on harpsichord."

The exhibition was designed to fit in with the 18th-century environment of the house and was presented in a traditional, low-key way with photographs, graphic panels and listening posts. Any anxiety on the part of the museum staff was quickly dispelled by the rapport struck between the two sets of enthusiasts.

"It's the passion for music that unites them," says Bardwell. "It was lovely to see our guides listening rapt to stories about Hendrix's last concert on the Isle of Wight from fans who were there. And Hendrix fans in jeans listened spellbound to the live baroque music we often have playing."

Above: Handel House Museum's Hendrix in Britain exhibition generated thousands more visitors than usual
Left: Jimi Hendrix played at the Isle of Wight festival weeks before his death in 1970

"A real high"

Bardwell is now looking at ways to incorporate the Hendrix story permanently. "The amazing publicity we got has put us on the map. We won't be changing our mission – we are a museum about Handel. But we now know there's an interest and that the juxtaposition works. We got a real high from doing this exhibition and it's completely changed the way we work and how we reach new audiences."

© TAS KYPRIANOU (HENDRIX IN BRITAIN, POSTER)

Above: an image from the John Player archive, which has been the subject of joint research between the University of Nottingham and the city's museums and galleries service

Learned friends

Partnerships between museums and universities are proving good ways to share expertise and access funding. By *Julie Nightingale*

The John Player archive had spent many unloved years in a company depot before, thanks to a new museum-university partnership, it was brought blinking into the light.

Amassed over more than a century at the world-famous tobacco company's HQ in Nottingham, the archive contains some 20,000 objects and artefacts related to advertising and promotion. They range from counter cards celebrating smoking in the 1880s, to a shot of entertainers Bruce Forsyth and Frankie Howerd gazing at a pack of fags in the 1960s.

Nottingham's museums and galleries service is cataloguing the mass of photographs, books, press cuttings, posters, signs and business records from 1877 until the early 1980s as part of a 21-month collaboration with the University of Nottingham. An exhibition of some the highlights opens at the Museum of Nottingham Life on 18 March and will include a film featuring ex-Player employees and their recollections of working life.

The bulk of the £100,000 funding has come from the Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC) through the knowledge transfer partnership (KTP) scheme, overseen by the Technology Strategy Board, a quango. KTPs were created to enable firms to tap into external academic expertise, but Nottingham's is understood to be one of the first partnerships between a university and its local museum service.

Both sides point to different benefits of working together in a formal partnership.

The university, which employs a funding bids specialist, led the way on applying to the AHRC and filling out the complex application, with input from the museum team.

Another boon was having the project researcher, Andy Newnham, based full-time at the museum to catalogue the archive. Though technically employed by the university, he has been a de facto member of the museum team.

And an important legacy of the project will be the avenues it has opened up for further collaborations. The steering group for the project features representatives from departments across the university – including history, social history, business and public health.

"We have built up new relationships," says Maria Erskine, keeper of community history for Nottingham City Museums and Galleries. "We are trialling a loans box for the public health department, for example, who look at things like the way health warnings on cigarette packaging have changed over time and how the industry reacted to that and we didn't even know it existed before. So from what we said we wanted to do originally, we have done so much more."

Gauging contexts

For the academics, aside from the intrinsic research value of the archive, the project has helped them understand just what it takes to interpret material of this kind in a way that is meaningful to the public as well as scholars. The university team were surprised to learn, for example, that the cataloguing process would take longer than six months and was likely to run all the way through the project (it's still not finished).

"The really big issue has been grasping how much contextualisation you have to have for an artefact, how much depth you have to go into," says Liz Harvey, the head of the University of Nottingham's school of history. "There's an interest in the school of history in the history of consumer culture, as well as social history and local history as academic topics, so of course we are interested in the research potential of an in-depth archive like this.

"We are interested in forging links with the local museum service and have also taken a lot of good ideas from their experience of working ▶

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with the community and how one might use artefacts and images for educational value," concludes Harvey.

Collaborations don't necessarily have to be programme or project-focused. Newcastle's Discovery Museum, part of Tyne and Wear Archives and Museums, is involved in collaborative PhDs with two of its local universities in which postgraduates use the museum collections for their academic research. This will also be of practical use to the museum.

A longstanding relationship with the International Centre for Cultural and Heritage Studies (ICCH) at Newcastle University led to a first PhD on museum memories online, looking at how the web is transforming museums' relationship with oral history. It included an examination of Memorynet, a collection exploring the lives of communities linked with the sea in north-east England.

Clear outcomes

Another partnership with Durham University is looking at museums as contact zones and how museums provide a meeting place for people across different cultures and generations.

It is essential for the museum to be involved in devising the research questions if what emerges is to be of real value to the institution, says Hazel Edwards, the manager at the Discovery Museum. It can take several years to complete a PhD, which is something museums need to factor in, Edwards adds. "You need to set short-term goals, such as an exhibition, and be clear about the outcomes you want."

Some academics might dig their heels in at being asked to produce a presentation midway through their research, rather than their traditional academic outcomes of a journal article, conference paper or book at its conclusion, says Rachel Pain, a social geographer, who leads the collaborative PhDs for Durham.

"There's an attitude that you need to have in non-university collaboration and it's quid pro quo. You have to spend a lot of time doing things that are not going to be beneficial to you in order to keep the collaboration afloat."

And students increasingly want to work in this way, Pain says. "A PhD is useless unless you are doing something with it and being involved in collaborations is better for them career-wise because they emerge more highly skilled," says Pain.

Amgueddfa Cymru –National Museum Wales (NMW) has a track record in working with academics. Recent activity has included the geology department's project work with the Open University (OU) to explore the potential for the application of a "virtual" petrological microscope in a museum gallery. The microscope was developed to support distance learning for OU earth-science students, but could be used in a museum to introduce visitors to petrology.

Also at NMW, Martin Bell, a specialist in experimental archaeology at Reading University, was brought in to excavate the Moel y Gaer roundhouse, one of three mock iron-age buildings erected at St Fagans open-air museum in Cardiff in the early 1990s. It was created to explore how a real iron-age building would have decayed and in the 20 years since, decay is exactly what is has done.

"One of the things constantly in our minds is treading the tightrope between research and learning access," says Adam Gwilt, curator of later prehistory at NMW. "This project showed that the site could be a learning environment for schools and the public and also have that research value. There is that dynamic of discovering more about the past but also demonstrating some of the processes involved in doing it, which can be just as important."

NMW has independent research organisation status, which shows its staff have research interests across a number of areas. This allows the museum to be a lead or supporting partner in funding bids and also in shaping projects.

The 2009 report Shared Interest, a joint initiative between North West Universities Association, Renaissance North West and Arts Council England (North West) suggests that collaboration can bring in funding (see box).

However, Abigail Gilmore, co-author of the report and the director of the Centre for Arts Management and Cultural Policy in Manchester, says that fundraising shouldn't be the main reason for collaboration. "What I found was that some of the more successful or less tense collaborations were those that weren't based on funding, or at least didn't have it as a primary objective, but were more about the fact that partners had a good fit with each other."

And it is the passion of those involved that most often determines whether the project fails or triumphs, Gilmore says: "Despite the clear importance of funding, our interviews suggested that relationships, professionals' enthusiasm and desire to do it are more important to the successful outcome of a project."

Julie Nightingale is a freelance journalist

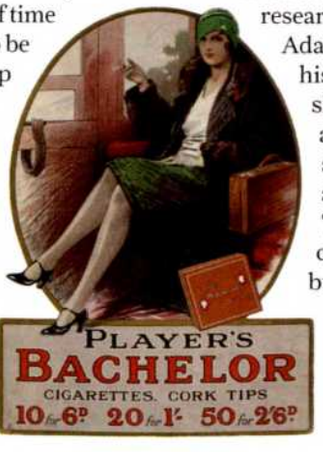
Smoking, Advertising and the History of Consumer Culture conference takes places on 18 May as part of the John Player project. www.nottingham.ac.uk/history/events/conference18may11.aspx

To our mutual benefit

The 2009 Shared Interest report looked at partnerships between museums, visual arts organisations and universities in the north west of England. The aim of the publication was to show how these sectors can achieve more by working together, and how professionals from each sector can collaborate. It was commissioned by Renaissance North West, Arts Council England (North West), and the North West Universities Association in order to find out what collaboration was taking place in the region.

The report featured 11 case studies of universities working with museums, such as the Bolton Museum and Archive Service with the University of Bolton, and Dove Cottage and the Wordsworth Museum with the University of Lancaster.

The report concluded that: "Collaboration, partnerships and research relationships between higher education, museums, galleries and visual arts organisations is productive and valuable. The quality and depth of research and knowledge of our culture and heritage can be greatly enhanced by the meeting of professional minds. The beneficiaries are curators, academics, students and artists."



Top: Bolton Museum and Archives Service and the University of Bolton have studied Humphrey Spender photographs. Above: a vintage advertisement from the John Player archive in Nottingham

Transfer window

With money tight and space at a premium, many museums are thinking hard about disposing of objects. But how are they going about the great giveaway? *John Holt* reports

The prognosis looked good for Joseph Lister's wooden wheelchair when it was admitted – in a satisfactory condition – into the medical collection at University College London (UCL).

But events took a turn for the worse recently when the good doctor's transport was wheeled before UCL's collections review team.

"It was ours because someone had obviously come across it many years previously and thought, 'Oh, that's important, we should keep it,' before promptly covering it in bubble-wrap and placing it in a store. That's the kind of thing we're trying to move away from now," says Subhadra Das, UCL's collections reviewer.

Lister, it turned out, was not a suitable case for treatment. True, the pioneering surgeon had been an arts graduate at UCL before deciding to turn what proved to be a very steady hand to medicine there in the 1840s.

But as his groundbreaking work with antiseptics was carried out elsewhere, the chair was deemed surplus to UCL's collection requirements and "contextually anomalous".

Summarily discharged, the chair is now bound for the Hunterian Museum in Glasgow, already home to a Lister collection.

The operation was a result of what is called "rescue accessioning" by UCL, which started its comprehensive collection review in 2006.

An initial aim was to find out exactly what had been amassed by the college's departments, all of which had managed collections differently with little or no attention paid to details such as records and descriptions.

"A lot of items were collected for scientific research, not for future display in a museum," says Das. "But by reviewing all this stuff we could explore what it is that makes things important while also working out what we were doing well and not so well."

The review process also enjoyed a very public display of democracy in an exhibition called Disposal, which enabled visitors to have a go at curatorship by voting for objects they thought worth saving.

The project resulted in new thinking and an inventory of weird and wonderful, though potentially superfluous, objects to place before powerful review committees.

Along with Lister's wheelchair, for example, the review considered boxes of rocks and fossils originally brought in over the years by students who subsequently left them behind to take up valuable shelf space.

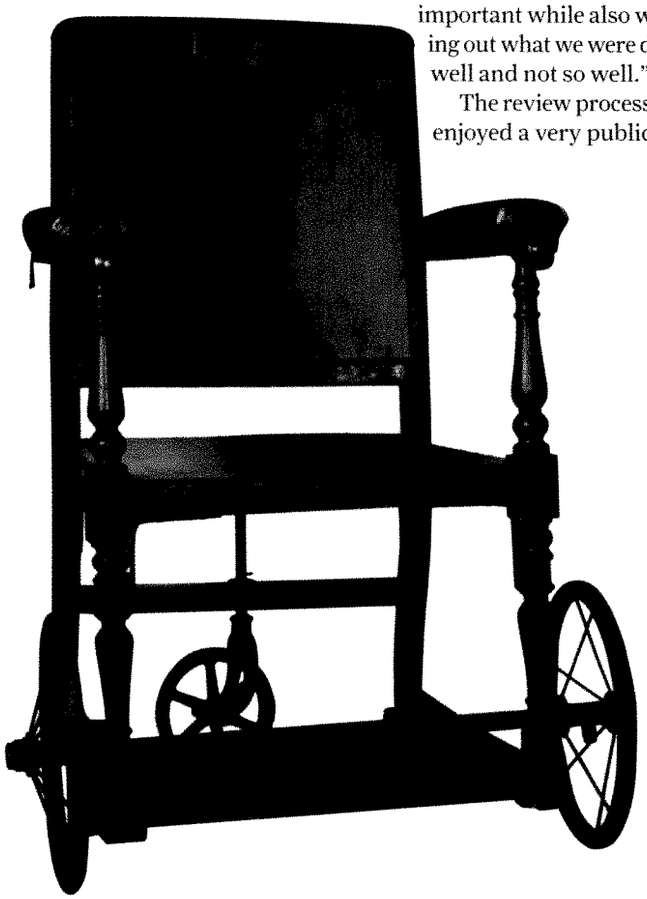
"We didn't know much about them; they were not a huge amount of use to us or, indeed, anyone else. We asked the powers-that-be if we could get rid of them. They said yes. The rocks went in the skip while a box of ammonites went to a private collector," says Das.

Across the capital, good old-fashioned curatorial detective work helped the National Maritime Museum (NMM) find a home for some 17th-century furniture, which had been sitting pretty but taking up room at Greenwich.

NMM curators had identified for potential disposal two pairs of chairs that had first been acquired in the late 1930s when the Queen's House at the museum had a policy of using purely period furniture to dress its rooms. One pair had been bought in a house sale in Devon in 1938 while the other had come from a donor who insisted her gift remain at Greenwich in perpetuity. But which was which?

"The registers weren't detailed enough to make a positive ID but they were beautiful examples of 17th-century chairs, and the Devon pair could potentially be transferred to a more appropriate home," says Helen Downes, the collections cataloguing standards and development officer.

The museum tried to locate the catalogue from the original joint sale held by Nutwell Court and Buckland Abbey, two properties ▶



Far left: fragments from one of University College London's archaeological collections. Left: Joseph Lister's chair left UCL for a new home at the Hunterian, Glasgow, in an act of "rescue accessioning"

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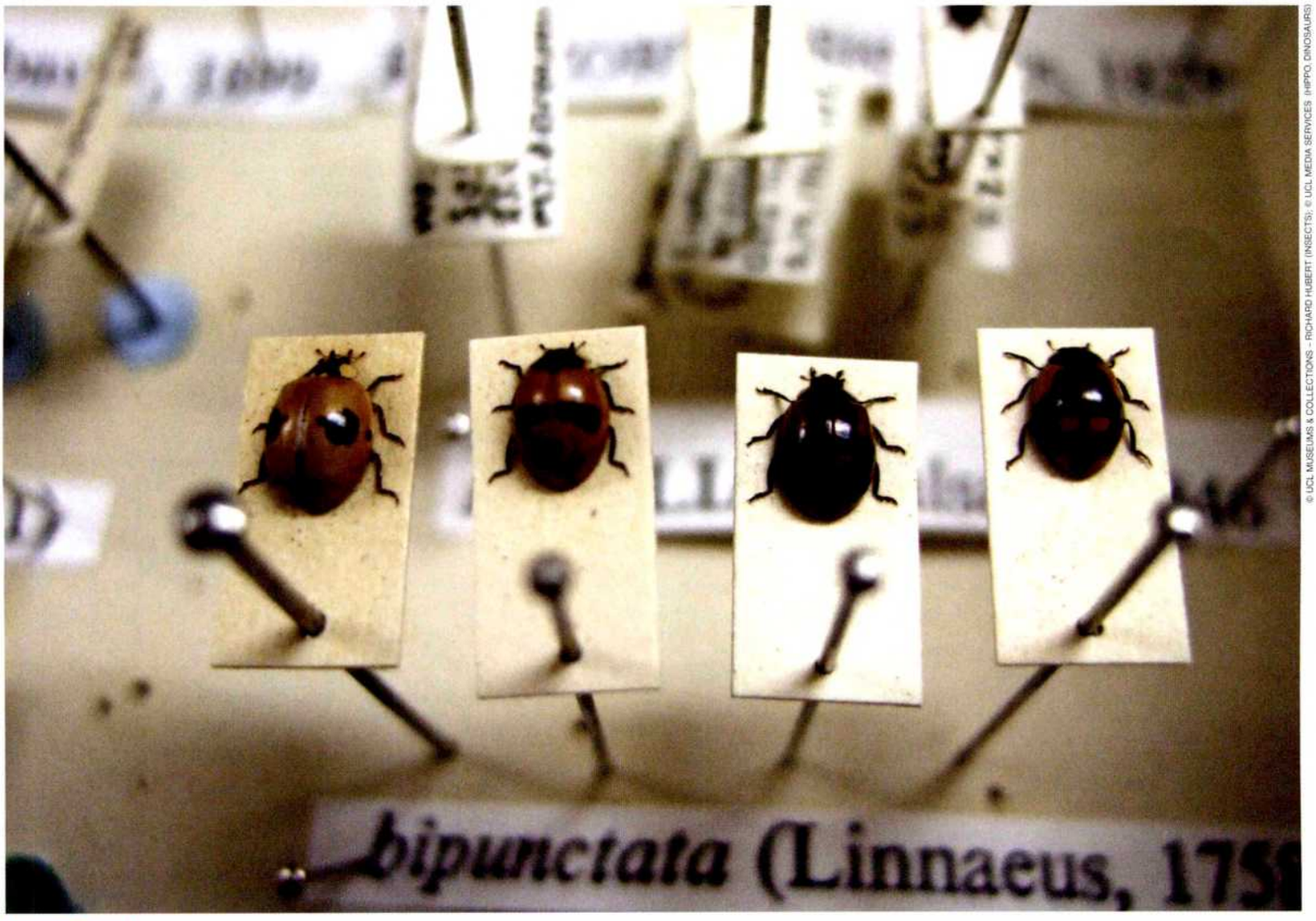

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Above: ladybirds in the collection of UCL. Should the college keep them or deaccession them?

associated with the family of Sir Francis Drake, 70 years previously.

Staff managed to trace the original advert for the sale from the Times's digital archive. The sales company still existed although none of its staff were able to recollect the chairs. A volunteer at Buckland Abbey suggested the museum try Exeter archives, which had a copy of the catalogue and this included a photograph of the chairs. At the same time, the museum's own research located a photograph of the chairs, in situ in the Queen's House. As staff knew the Nutwell Court chairs were the first pair acquired, the date of the photo enabled them to identify the Nutwell Court pair.

This rigorous approach is vital as disposals from NMM have to be ratified by the Board of Trustees and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport after all legalities have been thoroughly researched and reported to internal committees.

"The research and transfer of a collection object doesn't happen overnight; the case of the chairs took about two years to complete but they are back at Buckland Abbey, which is now in the hands of the National Trust and, largely as a result of the 1938 sale, had little furniture original to the house at the time of the transfer," says Downes. "They can now be displayed in the appropriate historical context."

Rehoming objects

Increasing numbers of museums and galleries are undertaking their own collections reviews with disposals in mind as space is at a premium and purse strings continue to tighten, says Sally Cross, the collections coordinator at the Museums Association (MA).

"There's a huge amount of duplicated social history, the vast majority of which doesn't have a high financial value and I suspect there's a layer beyond that which doesn't even get advertised," says Cross.

"Some questionable disposals decisions encouraged the sector to tighten its rules, resulting in what became known as 'a presumption against disposal'," she adds.

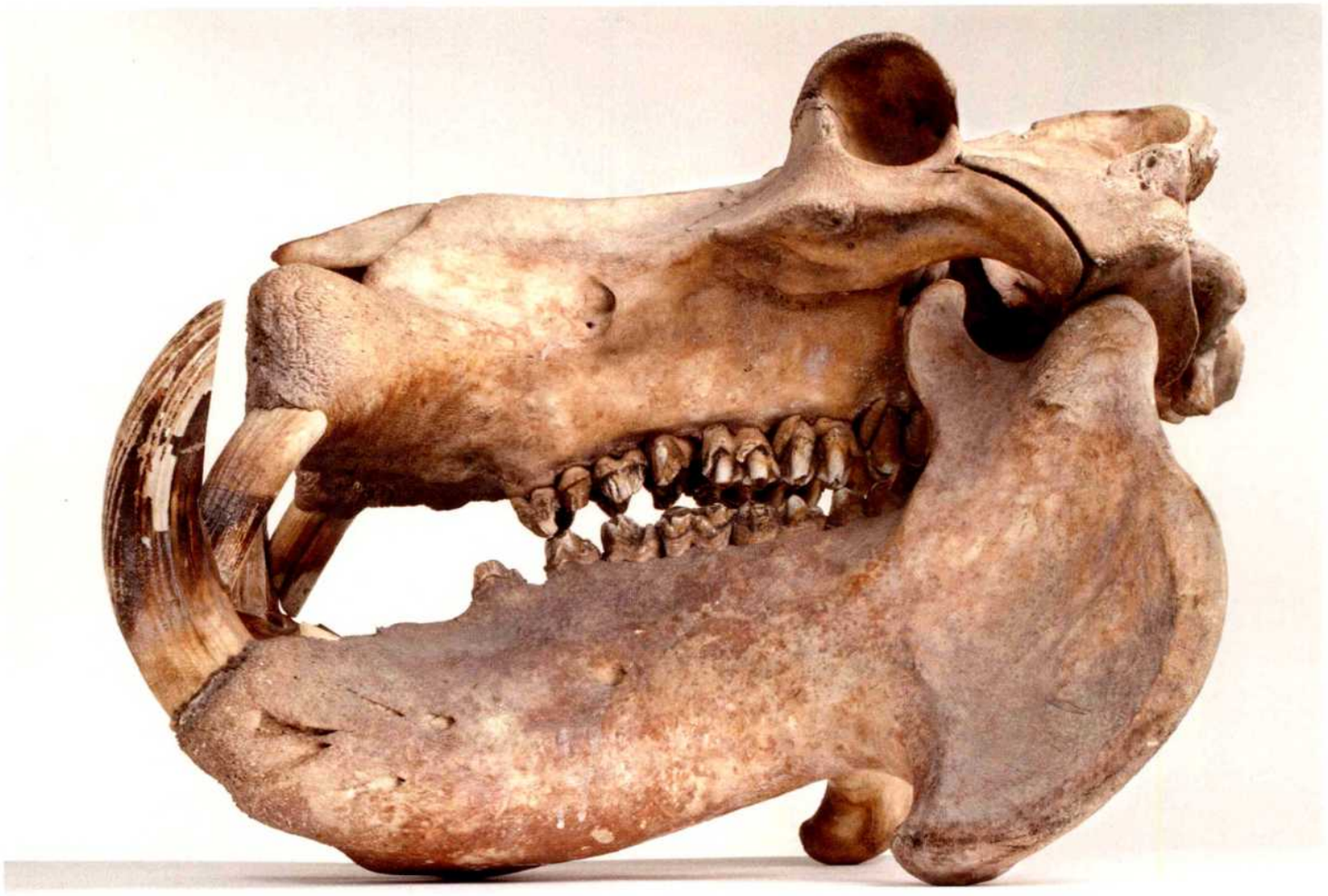
Eventually, the MA's code of ethics was overhauled in 2007, encouraging some innovative thinking behind transfers and loans.

Old Tools, New Uses, for example, is a project run by the Scottish Transport and Industry Collections and Knowledge network where domestic technologies such as typewriters and sewing machines are released by museums to be refurbished and sent "back to work" in Africa.

Many museums also make use of the MA's Find an Object service to rehouse objects; items range from musical instruments and aircraft spares to entire rooms of radio equipment.

The biggest success story from Find an Object has to be Perseverance IV, a timber grain-barge built in 1935 that came into the ownership of the Museum of London when it merged with the Docklands Museum two years ago.

"Our collections committee ruled that the barge had tenuous connections to the city's his-



Above and below: UCL's collections review committee recruited students to consider the fate of such disparate objects as a hippopotamus skull and a range of plastic dinosaurs

Object management

Law firm Farrer & Co is hosting a seminar about deaccessioning objects from public collections and possible reform of existing procedure. Foul Play or Opportunity Knocks? is at the National Gallery on 10 May.

It is chaired by Art Fund director Stephen Deuchar. Speakers include Ed Vaizey, minister for culture, and Nick Merriman, director of the Manchester Museum and convenor of the Museums Association's ethics committee.

tory, while its location made it difficult for museum staff to maintain it, so we decided to pursue disposal," says Nickos Gogolos, a registrar at the Museum of London.

A conservation report revealed that the vessel needed considerable specialist attention to keep it in tip-top condition.

"It would have cost upwards of £500,000 to repair, with £10,000 annual maintenance costs, which is quite a lot of money to us," Gogolos says. "Dismantling the barge would have cost around £40,000."

Disposal issues

Luckily, the National Trust sailed to the rescue, agreeing to keep the barge at its current location at Dapdune Wharf on the River Wey – which the trust conveniently owns – and looking to raise further funds towards its long-term restoration.

Disposal reviews procedures can also encourage debate about the precise roles of the museum and its collections.

The Royal Scottish Academy (RSA) in Edinburgh, for example, consulted widely during its collections review and found involving stakeholders to be very helpful to its planned disposal of a series of paintings.

"At the time, we were going through Accreditation and asking ourselves questions about the collections, while the Scottish Executive was also in the process of arguing the case for their national significance," says Joanna Soden, collections curator at the RSA.

"We are a fine-art organisation but some of the material does not fit into that category and was gifted for specific art-related reasons. A review enables us to see if it would make more sense to transfer it because we don't necessarily have the best expertise to look after it and interpret it to the full."

John Holt is a freelance journalist

For more on disposals: www.museumsassociation.org/museum-practice/collections-reviews

Katy Archer at a glance

Katy Archer started her career in 2000 as an explainer and project developer at the National Railway Museum, York. She then moved to the Royal Engineers Museum in Chatham, Kent, as its education officer.

In 2003 Archer returned to Yorkshire to become an education officer at Leeds Museums and Galleries, where she was responsible for learning provision at Abbey House Museum and Armley Mills Industrial Museum.

Archer then moved to the National Centre of Citizenship and the Law (NCCL)/Galleries of Justice in Nottingham. She started as the learning and access manager and was the director of the NCCL by the time she left in 2010 to become the director of the People's History Museum in Manchester.

Archer has an MA in museum studies from the University of Leicester and is an associate member of the Museums Association. She has also been a trustee of the Group for Education in Museums.

Katy Archer tells *Simon Stephens* why the People's History Museum is worth fighting for. Photographs by *Gary Calton*

Marching on

The People's History Museum (PHM) in Manchester reopened last year after a £12.5m redevelopment with the tagline: "There have always been ideas worth fighting for." A year later the museum has a battle of its own – to create a sustainable model for its future in the face of public spending cuts.

The person leading the fight is Katy Archer, who became director in August last year, replacing Nick Mansfield, who had been the head of the museum for the previous 21 years. The PHM receives about 70% of its income from the public sector, with the largest chunk coming from the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities. The grant is under review and the museum will know the outcome any day now.

"I am used to working in the independent sector and am not afraid of organisations having to raise money and think creatively about how to do that, as that was very much part of my last role," says Archer, who joined from the National Centre for Citizenship and the Law (NCCL), an educational charity that is the sister organisation of Nottingham's Galleries of Justice Museum. "But the impact of coming to an organisation that has always had public sector funding, which is now being taken away bit by bit, is a little more challenging than I anticipated."

The museum also gets money from Manchester City Council, which is implement- ▶

ing huge spending cuts, and from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). The museum will get some DCMS funding for the next few years but this will disappear altogether by 2015 as the PHM is one of the seven non-national museums that the department for culture is hoping to find new sponsors for.

Looking to the future

For Archer, the speed of the changes in funding will be crucial, particularly with regard to the support from the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities.

"I am happy that we will be able to develop the way we operate as a business to be more entrepreneurial and think differently about the funding we get," she says. "If I have three to four years to do that, then great, but if I have a few months, it is going to be a slightly different answer."

Dealing with actual and potential budget cuts has taken up a lot of Archer's time. This, combined with running the museum on a day-to-day basis and getting to know the city, the museum and its stakeholders, has not left much space for anything else.

"It is quite an uncertain time and I would have liked to have been further on with my vision of where the organisation is going and my thoughts about what we can do with this fantastic resource, but it feels like we are having to be quite reactive. We are having to focus on the bottom line."

The museum did receive a shot in the arm last month when it was included on the ten-strong longlist for the £100,000 Art Fund Prize. A shortlist of four museums will be announced in May with the winner revealed on 15 June.

Archer's previous employer, the Galleries of Justice, was the first winner of the £100,000 prize in 2003 (the award was then known as the Gulbenkian Prize). She joined the Nottingham museum in 2005 as the learning and access manager and worked her way up to become the director of the NCCL.

Before the NCCL, Archer worked for the National Railway Museum in York, the Royal Engineers Museum in Chatham and Leeds Museums and Galleries.

"The progression I've made has partly been about being in the right place at the right time, but it's also to do with hard work and flexibility, as I've moved across the country. All of those moves have added something to my understanding of the sector and my understanding of what is important to me about museums and where I feel I can make a difference. But I would say that my time in Nottingham had the biggest impact on my career."

Left: the museum tells the story of people's struggle for their rights. Right: the galleries chart the history of democracy from the early 18th century to the present day. Below: simple interactives, such as these hats that children can try on, help the museum appeal to families

Flexible working

Archer says that she benefited from the Galleries of Justice being an independent museum that had the flexibility to let her work in a number of different roles. She was helped by Tim Desmond, the chief executive of the NCCL and the Galleries of Justice Museum.

"Tim was really supportive and gave me the opportunity to move through the organisation and to do things like the Clore Leadership Programme," Archer says. "I really benefited from him giving me that opportunity and not being afraid of letting me develop and progress. I did some really interesting work and learned a lot about an independent organisation that has to be commercial and entrepreneurial in its thinking. It had its ups and downs, but it was really exciting, dynamic and fast moving."

Archer hopes this dynamism and entrepreneurial spirit will help her find new ways for the PHM to raise money and survive the forthcoming cuts. And she is convinced that the museum has a lot to work with.

People's History Museum at a glance

The People's History Museum (PHM) originated from the Trade Union, Labour and Co-operative History Society. In the 1960s the society formed a small collection and, between 1975 and 1986, ran a museum in Limehouse Town Hall in London. The collections were then in storage until the Greater Manchester authorities made a funding offer. A new trust was created and the museum reopened in 1990, initially at 103 Princess Street.

In May 1994 new museum galleries were opened in the Pump House. The museum was known as both the National Museum of Labour History and the Pump House People's History Museum. In 2001 the museum decided to use one name to embrace the whole organisation: the People's History Museum.

In 2007 the museum closed for a £12.5m redevelopment, which was completed in February 2010 and was supported by a £7.5m Heritage Lottery Fund grant.

The PHM is a charity and has 15 trustees. It employs the equivalent of 25 full-time staff. Its revenue for 2009-10 was £1,009,989.

Its main funders are the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (c£450,000 a year), DCMS (c£200,000), the Higher Education Funding Council for England (c£100,000), the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (c£100,000) and Manchester City Council (c£100,000).

"It is by attempting to
reach the top in a single
leap that so much misery
is produced in the world."

The Museum of... Our pick of the UK's specialist collections

Sited at the edge of a national park, the Museum of Dartmoor Life preserves access to the area's history, says *Louise Gray*

Where Okehampton, Devon, on the edge of the Dartmoor National Park.
What The Museum of Dartmoor Life (MDL) is an independent charitable trust managed by a board of trustees.
Opened 1981. "It was the brainwave of the late John Young, at the time the president of the local Rotary Club. He had felt for many years that Okehampton and Dartmoor needed a museum that would reflect its history," says museum curator Maurie Webber. The museum is situated in a disused Victorian granary in the centre of Okehampton. It is open this year from 23 March to 11 December.
Collection Its emphasis is on the social history of Dartmoor and Okehampton from pre-history to the present. Displays cover subjects such as the nearby battle of Sourton Down in 1643, local geology, industry and rural crafts. Photographs, maps, tools and an archive of Okehampton-related documents are also on display.

Right: the Museum of Dartmoor Life is on the edge of Dartmoor. Below: stuffed cockerel Fabrice is one of the museum's quirkier exhibits. Bottom: galleries concentrate on the social history of Okehampton and its surrounding area

Help at hand Webber, the sole employed member of staff, has been curator for the past 11 years. There are 20 volunteers and a small Friends' association.
Budget In 2010-11, grants have been given by Okehampton Town Council (£3,500) and the Okehampton United Charity (£3,500). Income comes from admission fees (£3.50 adults), shop sales and venue hire.
In 2004-05 the museum raised £750,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund and European Regional Development Fund for a refurbishment. "We were the first museum this side of the moor to get anything from the European fund," Webber says.
Visitors 8,500 in 2010.
Highlights Webber chooses a pair of 14th-century engraved bells considered to be two of the most important bells in the UK. They have a link to Okehampton Castle and its then duke, Hugh Courtenay. She also likes the museum's bull-nose Morris pick-up vehicle from 1922; an array of medals from a local sharpshooter Thomas Ward; and a stuffed

cockerel, Fabrice, named after a visiting French student.
Sticky moment Webber points to the economic climate: "The role of voluntary organisations increases when funding is squeezed. The museum sector is no different."
Survival tip "Continue raising the profile of your museum. We were chuffed to get the 2010 Inspire Mark from the London Olympic Committee 2012 for our exhibition on Okehampton life between 1908-1948, the years that the last UK Olympics were held," she says.
Future plans To galvanise the museum's Friends organisation.

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Extraordinary Heroes, Lord Ashcroft Gallery, Imperial War Museum, London, p44

Chartism, Newport Museum and Art Gallery, p52

Reviews

'While it's recognised as a major event in numismatics, the exhibition is also significant to those of us who would never bother making a special effort to look at a display of medals' *Sara Selwood* on Extraordinary Heroes, Lord Ashcroft Gallery, Imperial War Museum, London

Bolton Lives Gallery, Bolton Museum, p50

Valence House Museum, Dagenham, p48

© IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM (JACK CORNWELL VC) © THE EXHIBITION FACTORY (VALENCE HOUSE FANSHAWE GALLERY)

Extraordinary Heroes, Lord Ashcroft Gallery, Imperial War Museum

Extraordinary Heroes presents a new way of displaying medals that aims to bring them to life by focusing on what they represent, writes *Sara Selwood*

Lord Ashcroft, who has given his name to a new gallery at the Imperial War Museum (IWM), is nothing if not controversial. His media coverage is so extensive that Google recommends options for refining online searches about him. These include references to his millions; news reports about him; the BBC; tax; his relationship with the Turks and Caicos Islands; and his yacht.

But, whatever the weight of those concerns, both Google and Ashcroft's own website attest to the importance that he attaches to the Lord Ashcroft Gallery and to his medal collection. His publications are dominated by monographs on bravery and the medals awarded for it – Special Forces Heroes, Victoria Cross (VC) Heroes, and George Cross (GC) Heroes – and he is currently presenting a series on the latter on the Discovery Channel.

So, what's the story? Ashcroft is an ex-deputy chairman of the Conservative Party and treasurer of the International Democrat Union, a centre-right international grouping of conservative, Christian-democratic and liberal-conservative political parties. Why should this entrepreneur and politician be so passionate about danger and heroism? And what prompted him to build up a collection of VCs, estimated to be worth more than £30m?

Bravest of the brave

Ashcroft was inspired by his father's actions during the Normandy landings. He believes that the country owes an enormous debt of gratitude to its heroes. According to an interview linked to the IWM website, when he held the first VC that he bought, he felt a surge of pride on reading the citation that told the story of its holder.

"I wanted more," said Ashcroft. "I set my heart upon building a formidable collection." He now owns 164 VCs, the largest private collection in the world, and describes them as "simply, my pride and joy".

This is what informed the basis of the IWM's new exhibition, in which Ashcroft's collection is displayed alongside the 48 VCs and 31 GCs, the civilian equivalent of the former medal, held by the IWM.

At one level, Ashcroft's involvement is an exemplary model of the kind of philanthropy that the coalition government is currently trying to encourage. He not only donated £5m to build the gallery but, as a trustee of the new Imperial War Museum Foundation, is working to establish a fundraising strategy and generate money for the museum's development plans.

But Extraordinary Heroes represents another kind of model. While it's evidently recognised as a major event in the world of numismatics, the exhibition is also significant to those of us who would never bother making a special effort to look at a display of medals. Despite being its central focus, Extraordinary Heroes is a long way off being just about the VC and the GC. It's about what the medals represent and, as such, it's a fascinating example of how museums can bring life to what might otherwise be perceived as unforthcoming, objects of material culture. ▶

Top: commemorative stamps featuring Jack Cornwell, VC.
Above: the Victoria Cross awarded to William Kerr in 1857.
Right: Odette Sansom received the George Cross for her resistance work in occupied France

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glass made of ideas

Maybe this is the new numismatics.

For Ashcroft, the medals speak for themselves: "From time to time, I like to sit quietly and look at the medals, thinking of the valour their recipients displayed." But, as Medal News observed, not everybody "looks at things as we do". Some of us need more help in understanding how the VC and the GC represent the gold standard of bravery – the "bravest of the brave".

Courage, hot and cold

The exhibition clearly contributes to the IWM's mission, currently articulated as exploring how the history of modern conflict affects us all, from the frontline to the home front.

Extraordinary Heroes is arranged according to qualities associated with courage: boldness, aggression, leadership, skill, sacrifice, initiative and endurance. Each section delves into the life stories and tales of the bravery of featured recipients, from the time of the Crimean war to the present. Even within those themes, different kinds of courage are represented – spur-of-the-moment bravery and instances of hot courage; and the cool and sustained bravery of, say, bomb-disposal experts.

The narratives of those, whom in the face of extreme situations did extraordinary things, are compelling enough. Their stories are reinforced by additional information, provided via interactive touchscreens, animated graphic novels, sound clips and objects.

Objects on display include the diving suit that Acting Leading Seaman James Magennis wore in 1945 when he attached magnetic mines to the Japanese cruiser Takao; a pill box containing a needle, cotton, and a broken razor blade – the only possessions of French resistance fighter Odette Sansom; and a postcard celebrating Lieutenant Leefe Robinson's 1916 destruction of a German airship on a night-time raid over London.

Educational link

While these objects provide a tangible link to the events being narrated, they're inevitably somewhat macabre.

Although the messages of the exhibition might appear to be clear, Extraordinary Heroes is highly discursive. The introductory screens cover the history and manufacture of the VC and GC medals on the one hand. They also feature a range of talking heads who reflect on the concepts of bravery and courage from a multiplicity of perspectives – personal, psychological, sociological, religious and naive. Ashcroft himself appears, but is no more privileged than the local teenagers from Street Genius, who were involved in a project organised by the IWM and BBC 21st-Century Classroom website in the run-up to the exhibition.

Unlike many museums, who keep the work of their learning programmes well hidden, the work of these participants is integrated into the exhibition – not least in depictions of the stories of heroes such as Private Johnson Beharry, who moved his column out of an ambush and carried wounded comrades to safety in Iraq in 2004, and Matt Croucher, a Royal Marine reservist, who threw himself on an exploding grenade to protect his comrades in Afghanistan in 2008.

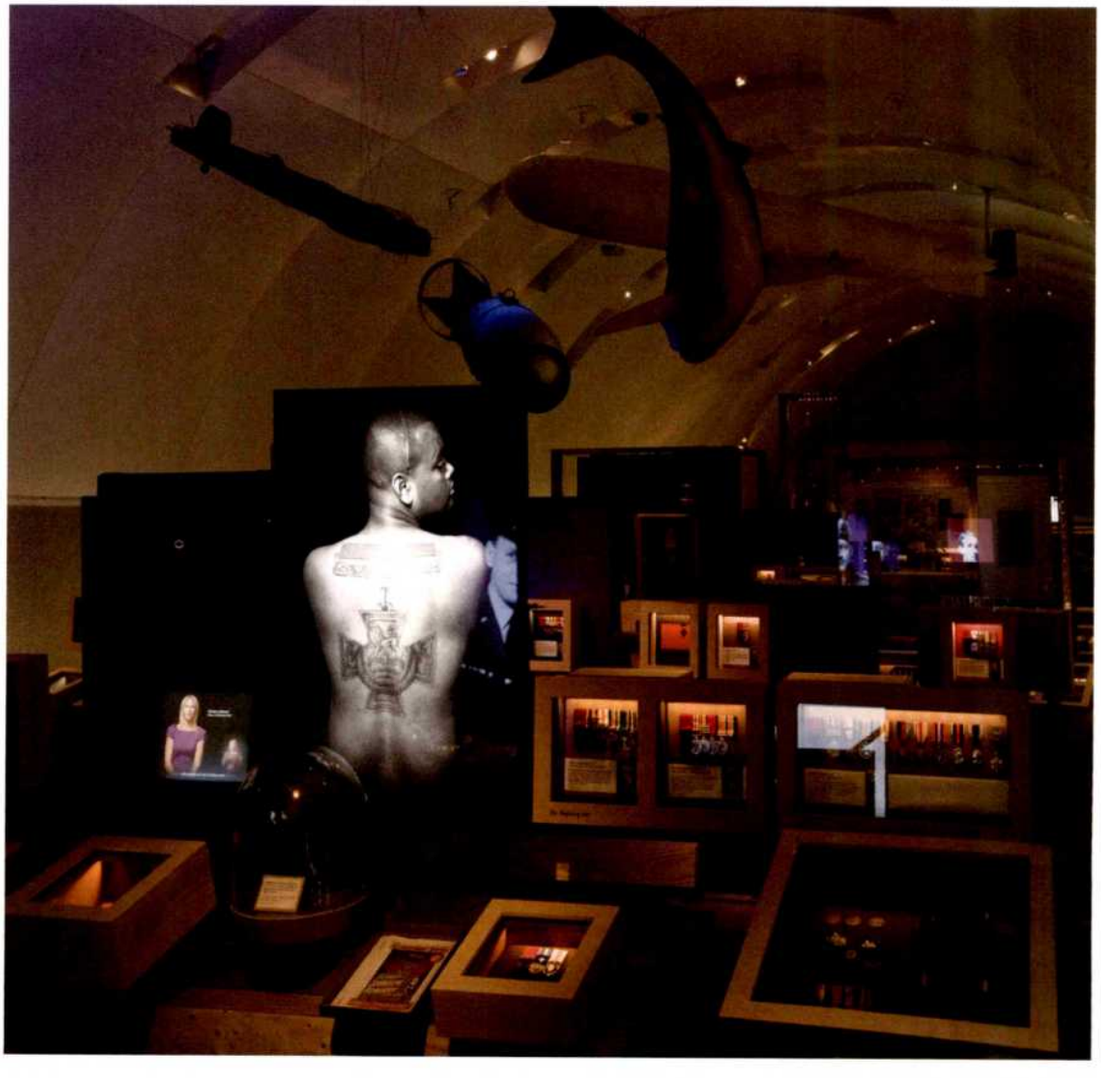
If the texture of Extraordinary Heroes varies, so does the tone of the interpretation. Some of the captions are written as you might expect – objective, historical accounts alongside oral histories and old news clips. Elsewhere, the museum imports a style derived from graphic novels, whose subject matter typically focuses on derring-do.

Although the exhibition often describes deaths and willful self-sacrifice, it ultimately offers a picture of the courage that many humans are capable of. Our greatest sadness must be in respect of the trauma, unhappiness and, sometimes, poverty that affects some of these extraordinary heroes after being awarded their medals.

Sara Selwood is a museum consultant

Project data

Cost £5m
Funder Lord Ashcroft
Exhibition design Casson Mann
Graphic design Graphic Thought Facility
Lighting design DHA Design
Structural engineer Eckersley O'Callaghan
Digital interactives Clay Interactive (Everybody's Story & Portrait Screens), ISO (Journey Interactive), Spiral (Introduction)
Specialist LED light bars Schott



War photographer Don McCullin's portrait of Johnson Beharry VC dominates a display in the Lord Ashcroft Gallery

© IMPERIAL WAR MUSEUM. PHOTOGRAPHY DON MCCULLIN

© LONDON BOROUGH OF BARKING AND DAGENHAM HOUSE PLATE) © THE EXHIBITION FACTORY (GALLERIES)

Valence House Museum, Dagenham

Oliver Green is impressed by what he sees as one of the best local history museums in London

At the reopening of Valence House Museum last summer the Dagenham Destroyer welcomed the Dagenham Idol home. The Destroyer is local boxer Kevin Mitchell, current British Super Featherweight champion, who cut the tape and donated a pair of his gloves for display in the local celebrities section of the Communities' Gallery.

The idol is an older Essex boy, a wooden figure carved 4,500 years ago and one of the earliest known representations of the human form in the UK. Found in marshland near Dagenham in 1922, it had been one of the prize items in Colchester Museums' collections, but is now back where it belongs, in a generous example of an inter-museum loan. Standing in its own special showcase, the idol is the first object that visitors encounter in this impressively refurbished local history museum.

Rapid urbanisation

Dagenham has been transformed within living memory. A century ago it was a village in rural Essex. Now it covers much of the London Borough of Barking & Dagenham, an almost completely built-up district of Greater London. The change happened rapidly in the 1920s and 1930s, following decisions taken a long way from Essex by the London County Council (LCC) and the Ford Motor Company of Detroit.

In 1920 the LCC started building an enormous cottage housing estate on former farmland at Becontree. Within a decade the council had created a new town for over 100,000 people. Unlike most of London's booming interwar suburbs, which were private developments where the middle classes could buy their own homes, Becontree was a giant working-class social housing estate, where nearly everyone was a council tenant who had moved out from crowded east London.

Ford built the biggest integrated car plant in Europe at Dagenham Dock, moving its entire British operation and more than 2,000 key workers from Manchester in 1931. It soon became the largest local employer. By 2002, when car assembly at Dagenham ended, more than 10m vehicles had been built there.

Valence House Museum provides an important and tangible heritage link between the pre-20th century rural past and the post-industrial present. The moated, timber-framed building dates from the 15th century and is

the only surviving manor house in the area. Originally scheduled for demolition when the LCC began work on the Becontree estate that now surrounds it, Valence House became the first offices of Dagenham Urban District Council when the local authority was created in 1926.

When a purpose-built Civic Centre was opened in 1937, the house became the headquarters of Dagenham Libraries and the chief librarian set up a local history museum in part of the building. It was a far-sighted move to establish a public museum for a new community that had no roots at all in the local area.

Seventy years later, when many local authorities in London were either neglecting or actively running down their museum and services, Barking & Dagenham council started work on a major project at Valence Park in partnership with the Heritage Lottery Fund. Valence House, now Grade II*-listed, has been carefully restored and renovated, with new museum displays throughout. An object-rich presentation, part chronological and part thematic, now gives a clear and entertaining overview of Barking and Dagenham's history.

The permanent displays and temporary exhibitions are well designed and very people-orientated. They are based on good collections but objects are linked wherever possible to named individuals, which helps to bring a wide range of local objects and stories to life.

Above: the Barking New Town and River Industry galleries trace the development of the Dagenham area. Left: a commemorative plate depicting the equal pay struggle at the Ford factory. Below: the 600-year-old Valence House survived scheduled demolition in the 1920s

Work and industry

Some of these are fascinating, such as the famous Dagenham Girl Pipers Band, who performed in front of Hitler in 1930s Berlin. The museum has examples of their tartan uniforms, dolls and souvenir jigsaws, all a bit like pre-war Bay City Rollers but with no Scottish connection. The area has also produced more than its fair share of soccer heroes, including Bobby Moore, Alf Ramsey and Terry Venables, all 20th-century Dagenham idols who make an appearance in the museum.

There are reconstructions of council house interiors from the Becontree estate and excellent use of oral history, personal snapshots and home-movie clips to show domestic life in Barking and Dagenham from the 1920s to the 1970s. I had expected to find more on local work and industry, particularly on life at the Ford factory, which became notorious for strikes in the 1960s and 1970s.

The 1968 walk-out by women machinists who made the seat covers at Dagenham was particularly significant in that it paved the way for 1970's Equal Pay Act. A local dispute grew into a national issue, a story that was heavily embroidered into one of the best British films of last year, Made in Dagenham.

The episode gets a mention in the museum, but the real-life drama of the rise and fall of Ford through the eyes of the local workers deserves a major display. Unfortunately, the company does not seem to have given the museum so much as a Cortina hubcap to represent its key role in the local economy.

Across the courtyard from the house, a former council depot has been replaced by a new research facility, local studies library, education room, cafe and shop. These are housed in a simple box-like structure that may not be great architecture, but is practical.

My only complaint is the complete lack of signage, either near or on any of the site buildings. Being in a park in the middle of London's largest council estate, Valence House is difficult to reach by public transport.

Barking & Dagenham council should be applauded for giving Valence House the support to make it one of the best local history museums in Greater London. It has also just opened a new high-tech central library in the borough, another investment in local public services that are being reduced all over the UK. Having made this commitment, I hope it is sustainable in the bleak climate of coalition cuts.

Oliver Green is a research fellow at the London Transport Museum

Project data

Cost £7.5m
Main funders Heritage Lottery Fund £1.8m, MLA £24,000, London Borough of Barking & Dagenham
Curator Leeanne Westwood
Architect Feilden Clegg Bradley Studios
Main contractor Mansell Construction Services
Exhibition design Brennan Design
Graphic design Hotrod Creations
Audiovisuals Elbow Productions
Installation Exhibition Factory
Display cases Click Netherfield

Bolton Lives Gallery, Bolton Museum

A new gallery telling the story of Bolton and its people is proving a hit with visitors and the local council should take note, says *Mark Suggitt*

"Between Bolton and Manchester the ugliness is so complete that it is almost exhilarating. It challenges you to live there." So wrote JB Priestley in 1934 on his way to the "Work Town" made famous by Mass Observation, the organisation founded in the 1930s to study the daily lives of ordinary people in the UK.

It's still not the prettiest of English railway journeys. But had Priestley stopped in Bolton he would have found a handsome centre surrounded by mills and terraces. Strolling past the grand town hall and the newspaper stands proclaiming council job losses, I wondered what stories the new local history galleries would tell.

The new gallery replaces a local history museum that closed due to the mid-1990s cuts. It is housed in the elegant 1930s museum and art gallery on Le Mans Crescent.

The gallery is reached by either stairs or a new lift and sticky-tacked posters advertise the venue as you ascend. Not a great start, but things pick up once inside.

Visitors are faced by a large panel that sets out the purpose of the gallery: to tell the story of 250 years of change in the area and to link those changes with events in the wider world.

Manufacturing base

Turning left you are faced with one of the star objects, Samuel Crompton's spinning mule machine from the late 17th century. Surrounding it are displays that chart the rise of Bolton as the world centre of cotton spinning. A colourful graphic displaying trademarks of the companies declares "We Spin for the World". This is contextualised by panels that link Bolton's role within the broader industrial revolution and the British empire. Most of the cotton came from the slave states of the US until the civil war. Following the cotton famine of the 1860s, the UK looked to Egypt as a supplier.

Crompton's mule is supported by a short film portraying a

Below: the Medical Ailments in Victorian Times section in the Bolton Lives gallery goes beyond the usual collection of quack powders and potions.
Right: a John Bull figure, used to advertise Lions Motor Oils in Bolton; a penny farthing bicycle in the Travelling Around gallery

dialogue between and Crompton and inventor Richard Arkwright. This is very well done and clearly illustrates why Arkwright, who, unlike Crompton, pioneered factory production, was the more successful.

The displays that follow chart the rise of the mills, industrial exploitation and the unsanitary conditions of the growing town. The story is taken up to date and includes stories of migration, workers' rights and dramatic decline in the 1980s. When the last mill closed in 2001, only 20% of the local workforce was in manufacturing as opposed to 63% in 1841.

On the opposite wall is an illustrated timeline that charts the development of Bolton from a small town in 1650 to the post-industrial place it is today. Touchscreens, original paintings and film are used to chart the rise of civic society from the energetic chaos of the industrial revolution.

Mass Observation

Passing through an arch displaying images of mills, the main section of the gallery features open and cased displays. These are thematic and cover those areas typical of many local history galleries: local industries, community life, home life, entertainment and childhood.

It would be easy to say that this approach is formulaic, but as curators we have to tell coherent stories that can be easily understood. This is done well here, with carefully selected objects and clear, brief text.

It's a collection of short stories that add up to deliver an excellent overview of the history of the town. They illustrate both how similar Bolton is to other industrial towns and also its genuine distinctiveness. There are wonderful things such as the Lion's Motor Oil advertising figure of John Bull, a photograph of a Bolton Wanderers Football Club Christmas party and a wooden figure used to celebrate Oak Apple Day on 29 May.

A closer inspection also reveals material that is more difficult. The warfare section displays a world war two police log that illustrates the fear of looting from bombed buildings. The section on Unhealthy Bolton displays an unfinished white work layette sitting alongside the usual quack medicines. It was discovered in a linen cupboard. Did the mother miscarry or did the baby die in infancy? It's a poignant illustration of hard times.

Another example of intelligent curation is a section on personal records, diaries and photographs from the archives. This is linked to a display on Mass Observation's work in the town and a selection of the remarkable work of Humphrey Spender, who took nearly 1,000 photographs of Bolton in the late 1930s – a lost world of cobbles, shawls, grime, public bars and cigarette smoke.

Value for money

The displays are in an elegant gallery with a balcony above that houses the natural sciences and international collections. The original parquet floors have been retained and the displays have a simple industrial aesthetic using printed metal mesh and muted browns and greys. They are smart and functional.

Unfortunately, the introductory panels that display the headline themes are angled and therefore make the words impossible to read. This is the only mistake, as elsewhere the text is readable and the interactives simple to use. Circulation is also a problem as most visitors I saw approached the timeline from the end. Still, I suppose you can go back in time as easily as forwards.

This is a project that was delivered on a budget of a £530,000. It has successfully achieved its objective of illustrating the lives of Bolton people and the changes they have witnessed and gives a real flavour of the town.

Bolton Council, take note. This is a real value-for-money project and instead of flogging off collections, you should be investing in the service. After all, the gallery is going down well. When I visited it was busy with parents, children, a guided group, adults and a group of lads just hanging out.

Like most modern galleries it has a comments board. Sitting among the usual responses of "fab" and "brill" was one that said: "I look back at my time in life and realise I'm a part of history." That's what museums are here to do: to validate "ordinary" lives lived in extraordinary times.

Mark Suggitt is a cultural consultant

Project data

Cost £530,000
Main funders Bolton Council, North West Development Agency, ERDF, MLA, Renaissance North West
Research in-house
Exhibition design Studio SP

Chartism, Newport Museum and Art Gallery

Newport Museum has created a thoughtful and accessible exhibition about the city's role in the Chartism movement. By *Tim Bryan*

This new permanent exhibition at the Newport Museum and Art Gallery highlights the key role the city played in the development of one of the earliest working-class labour movements in the world. It describes Chartism as "one of the most important political movements of our times" and starts with the violent demonstrations that took place in Newport in 1839, which were the beginning of a campaign that would continue well into the 19th century, eventually leading to permanent changes to democracy in Britain.

The exhibition takes a people-centred approach, telling the stories of some of the key protagonists in the drama that unfolded in the South Wales town in the mid-19th century. As well as the three main Chartist leaders, John Frost, William Jones and Zephaniah Williams, it also highlights the role of the mayor of Newport, Thomas Phillips, who represented the establishment and led the militia against Chartist protesters.

The original People's Charter of 1838, which gave the Chartist movement its name, is kept at the Bishopsgate Library in London, and so a copy of the document detailing the Chartist's five demands is displayed instead. With parliament now under more scrutiny than ever, it is interesting that in addition to the call for votes for men over 21 and the introduction of a secret ballot, Chartist demands included paying MPs and the creation of constituencies of equal size, issues still being debated today.

1839 uprising

The recreation of a room from an affluent middle-class town house of 1810, and an interactive illustrating the "truck system" of in-kind pay for industrial workers of the time provide ample context for visitors to see some of the inequalities that led to the rise of Chartism in South Wales and other industrial areas.

The events of 4 November 1839 take centre stage. A graphic shows that the rising was the result of three separate marches by workers from the coalmines and workshops in the valleys above Newport. The marchers converged in the town square opposite the Westgate Hotel, where it was rumoured that Chartist prisoners were being held. Visitors approach the displays through a mock hotel facade before reading an account of the carnage that followed a confrontation in front of the building.

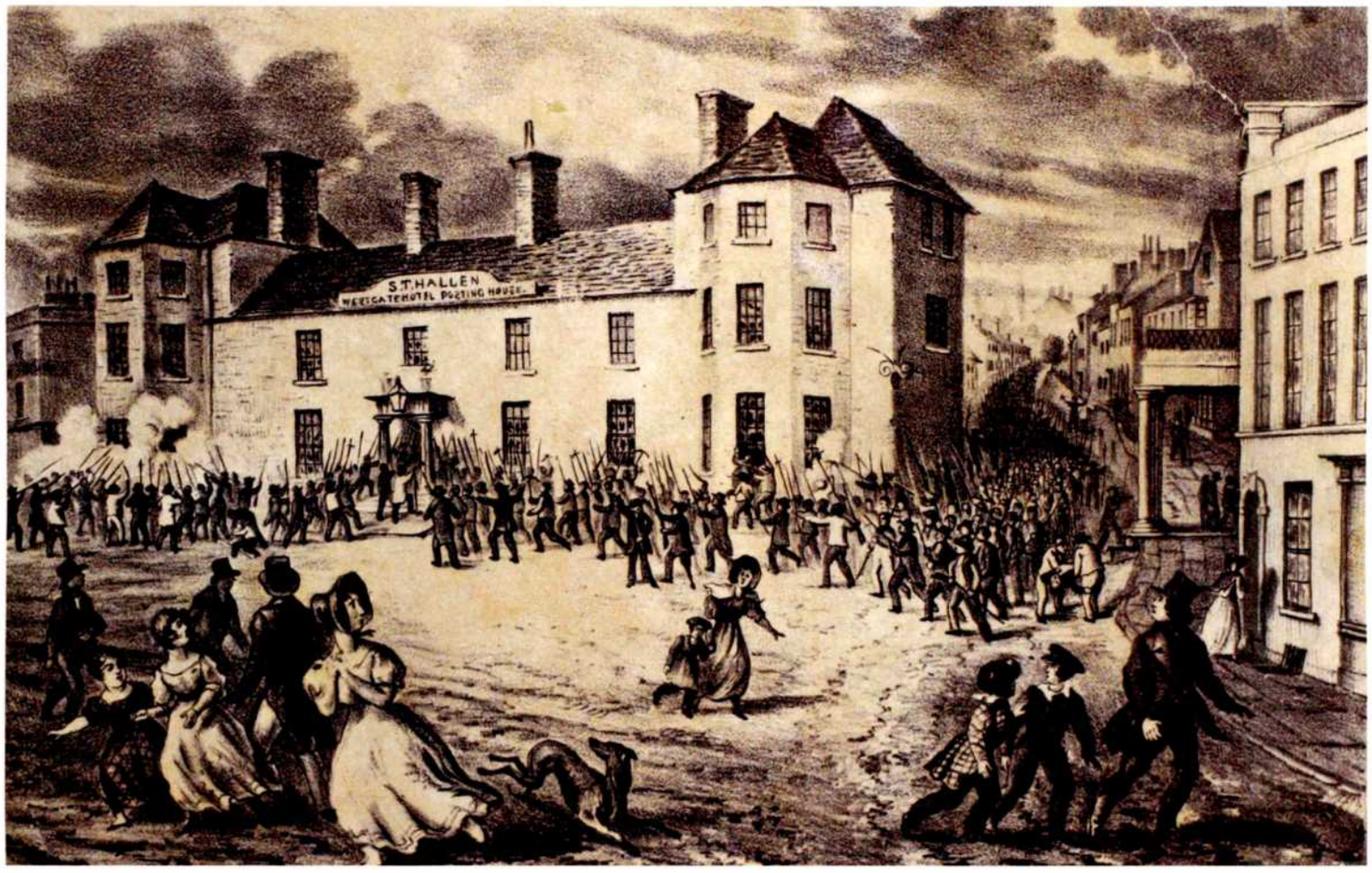
Phillips had sworn in over 500 special constables and enlisted the help of more than 80 troops, whose weapons were more than a match for the Chartists armed only with home-made pikes and swords. A striking showcase dominating the centre of the exhibition displays examples of weapons from both sides of the conflict. In the background, a recording of the sounds of a crowd plays.

However, the displays do not give visitors enough feel for the brutal outcome of the confrontation outside the hotel – no accurate casualty figures were ever confirmed, but is likely that 20 Chartists were killed, more than 50 wounded and 200 arrested after a battle lasting barely half an hour.

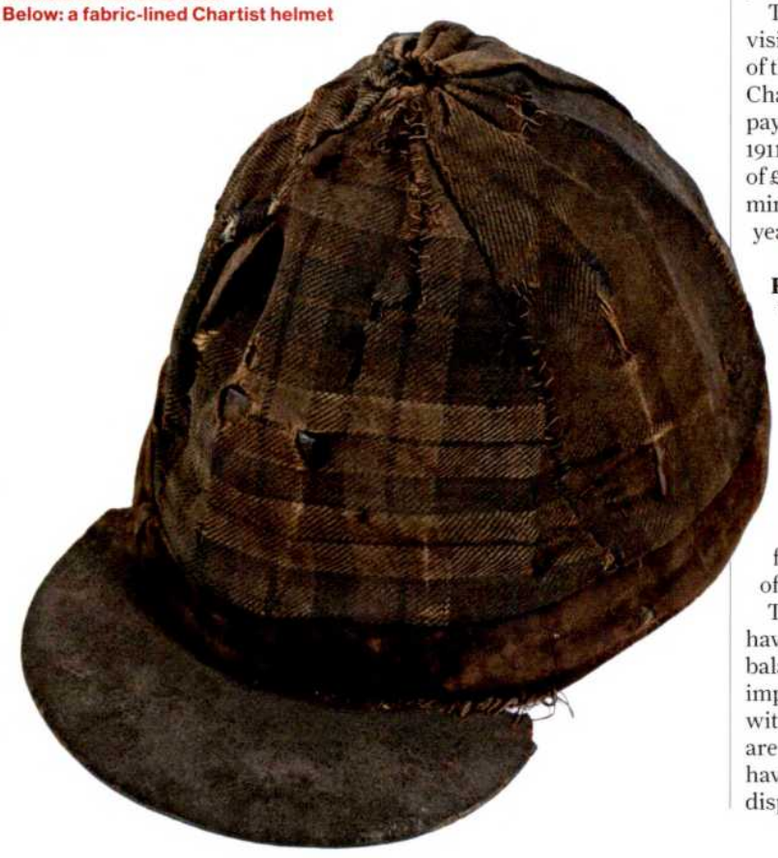
Silver scrap

If the reporting of the actual riot is too low-key, the displays describing what followed are more shocking. Copies of documents from the trial of the ringleaders in Monmouth show how the establishment aimed to put the Chartist movement firmly in its place. A list of jurors is shown, highlighting the fact that those deciding on the fate of the Chartists were farmers and gentlemen from rural Monmouthshire and not the industrial heartlands of South Wales. The three Chartist leaders were found guilty and sentenced to be hung, drawn and quartered, an outcome that even the government found unpalatable. After extensive lobbying, the sentence was commuted to transportation for life.

The story of Phillips is also told, illustrated by one of the most fascinating objects in the exhibition. Following the crushing of the protest, 600 local subscribers presented him with an 800-piece silver service. It seemed nothing of this gift had survived until an Essex scrap dealer stumbled on a square of metal that turned out to be a piece of silverplate inscribed with the



Left: a sword stick used in the 1839 Chartist rising in Newport. Above: JF Mullock's lithograph shows the struggle between the militia and the Chartists. Below: a fabric-lined Chartist helmet



names of the subscribers, an amazing survival. Purchased by the museum in 1982, it now takes pride of place in the exhibition.

The rest of the display helps visitors make sense of the legacy of the Newport rising. The five key Chartist demands are reviewed – pay for MPs was introduced in 1911 giving them an annual salary of £400, although it is noted that a miner's annual pay in the same year was £83.

Reflections on democracy

Visitors have ample chances to think about the nature of democracy, how it has changed and how we now view the voting process. A noticeboard allows people to leave their thoughts on the legacy of Chartism. Audio and video presentations give further context to the meaning of democracy.

Those creating this exhibition have had to tread delicately, balancing the exposition of an important piece of social history with the creation of displays that are accessible to visitors. They have succeeded in producing a display that is respectful and thoughtful in equal measure.

The impact of the Chartist rising is woven into Newport's consciousness, not only in the street names, but deeper into the collective memory of the place. One local told me that the reason that Newport was not awarded city status until 2002 was that "the establishment" had not forgiven the town for its "treacherous" actions in the 19th century. This exhibition will help to make sure that the Chartists' march for the rights of ordinary working people in Newport and beyond is not forgotten.

Project data

Cost £30,000
Funder In-house
Curator Rachael Lovering
Technical support officer Tristram Booth
Exhibition design in-house
Graphic design Smith and Jones
Audiovisuals Blackbox AV
Display case Armour Systems

Tim Bryan is the head of collections and interpretation at the Heritage Motor Centre, Gaydon

© RAGHU RAI (WOMAN PUSHING CART)

Opening this month

International Women's Day celebrates its centennial year with a sobering photo show. *Geraldine Kendall* selects the pick of exhibitions opening in March

Format International Photography Festival, Right Here, Right Now: Exposures from the Public Realm, Quad and various venues in Derby and beyond
4 March-3 April
Taking place in and around Derby, the Format festival centres on street photography. It is organised into two strands: Focus, looking at established practitioners, and Exposure, featuring work by up-and-coming artists. The festival is organised by the Quad arts centre, which hosts a major exhibition of street photography by practitioners such as Amy Stein, Joel Meyerowitz and Michael Wolf.
Cost n/a
Main funders Quad, University of Derby, Arts Council England
Curators Mike Brown (Derby City Council), Louise Clements (Quad), Format steering group
Website, design and graphics Katapult

42: Women of Sierra Leone, International Slavery Museum, Liverpool
4 March-15 April
Life expectancy for women in Sierra Leone, ranked as one of the world's poorest countries, is just 42. This exhibition puts a human face to the grim statistic, featuring 42 images by photojournalist Lee Karen Stow, who embarked on a project to teach photography to a group of women from Freetown, Sierra Leone, in 2007. Angered by the gross imbalance between life expectancy there and in the west, Stow documented the daily lives of the women she met, exploring their courage in the face of hardship in a country where they do not have equal access to education, social freedoms or healthcare. The exhibition is timed to coincide with the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day on 8 March.
Cost £4,800
Funder National Museums Liverpool
Curators Angela Robinson, Lee Karen Stow
Exhibition design and graphics in-house

Italian Drawings: Highlights from the Collection, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
8 March-10 July
An exhibition celebrating the highlights of the Fitzwilliam's extensive Italian drawings collection. The display spans the Renaissance to the early 20th century and features sketches by some of the greatest Italian masters, including Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael, Guercino, Titian and Modigliani.
Cost n/a
Funder in-house
Curator David Scrase
Exhibition design David Scrase
Graphics in-house

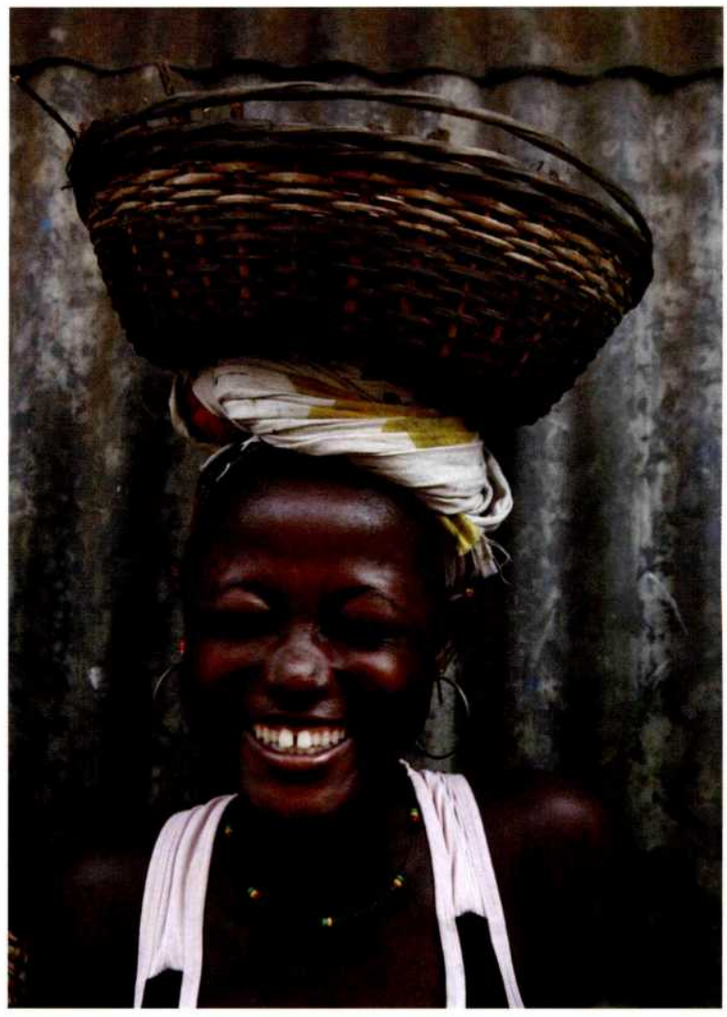
Impact: Collisions and Catastrophes, Royal Observatory, London
12 March-29 August
From meteor showers to the occasional asteroid strike, the Earth is under constant bombardment by debris from space. Impact uses images, archive material and interactive exhibits to look at the effects, both minor and apocalyptic, of these hits on our planet. Drawing on the latest scientific discoveries, the displays explore clues provided by extraterrestrial debris about the violent formation of the solar system and life on Earth itself. Visitors will have a chance to handle real space rocks. The exhibition is accompanied by a programme of events and planetarium shows.
Cost £18,000
Funder in-house
Curators Rob Edwards, Marek Kukula
Exhibition design and graphics in-house design team

At Home in Japan – Beyond the Minimal House, Geffrye Museum, London
22 March-29 August

The western stereotype of Japanese architecture comprises clean lines and minimalist spaces devoid of clutter – but is this a true insight into domestic life in the country? This exhibition questions such preconceptions, recreating the display, decoration and living habits found in contemporary Japanese homes. Using a full-size reconstruction of a standard urban apartment, filled with furniture and possessions, At Home in Japan is based on original ethnographic research carried out in Japanese houses in 2003.
Cost £55,000
Funder in-house. Funding for the 2003 project came from Sasakawa Travel Fund, the Japan Foundation, the British Academy, and the Japanese Society for the Promotion of Science
Curators Susan Andrews, Inge Daniels
Exhibition design ASFB Associates
Graphics Sally McIntosh

Alfred Wallis and Ben Nicholson, Compton Verney, Warwickshire
26 March-5 June
The discovery of the untrained Alfred Wallis, a retired Cornish fisherman who took up painting on his wife's death, by established artists Ben Nicholson and Christopher Wood, has gone down as a legendary moment in British art history. This exhibition examines the impact of Wallis's naïve style on Nicholson's work from the late 1920s through to the 1940s, during which time both artists cultivated a simplistic relationship with the landscape over formal technique and traditional perspective. Featuring highlights such as Wallis' Schooner Approaching Harbour, the exhibition also examines how naive art developed as a genre during the 20th century. It is part of a season on folk art at the Warwickshire gallery.
Cost undisclosed
Support Crane Kalman Gallery, London, Peter Moores Foundation
Curators Alison Cox, Antonia Harrison
Graphics Rose-Innes Associates

Andy Warhol, Southampton City Art Gallery and John Hansard Gallery, Southampton
27 March-26 June
Nearly 200 Warhol paintings, prints, posters, photographs and films are to be displayed across two of Southampton's art galleries. The works are drawn from Artist Rooms, a collection of modern and contemporary art gifted to Tate and the National Galleries of Scotland by art dealer Anthony d'Offay.
The Southampton City Art Gallery explores Warhol's fascination with fame, and is showing paintings, prints and posters alongside a reconstruction of the artist's Factory space. The John Hansard Gallery focuses on Warhol's film and photography, displaying rarely seen stitched photographs, self-portraits and celebrity portraits alongside film works.
Cost n/a
Main funders Southampton City Art Gallery (Southampton City Council) John Hansard Gallery (Southampton University), Artist Rooms, Art Fund
Sponsor ExxonMobil
Curators Southampton City Art Gallery, John Hansard Gallery in collaboration with Artist Rooms



© THE ANDY WARHOL FOUNDATION FOR THE VISUAL ARTS/ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY, NEW YORK/DACS, LONDON 2010 (LIZ, 1965) © FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM (CORREGIO) © KAREN LEE STOW (42)

Opposite page: Raghu Rai's photograph of an Indian street scene features in Derby's Format International Photography Festival. Above: Karen Lee Stow's 42 portraits of Sierra Leonean women at Liverpool's International Slavery Museum.
Below left: the Corregio's Nativity is among the Fitzwilliam Museum's exhibition of Italian drawings.
Below: two Southampton venues host Andy Warhol – including this portrait of Elizabeth Taylor – works from the Artist Rooms collection

Books

Archaeology, Cultural Property and the Military

Tristram Besterman supports calls to help the military protect cultural heritage, but is sceptical that the lessons have been learned from past conflicts

This collection of essays ranges over several centuries of war and its impact on art and archaeology. At its heart are two very contemporary questions: why was so much cultural property destroyed in the aftermath of the 2003 invasion of Iraq and how can such irretrievable loss be prevented in future?

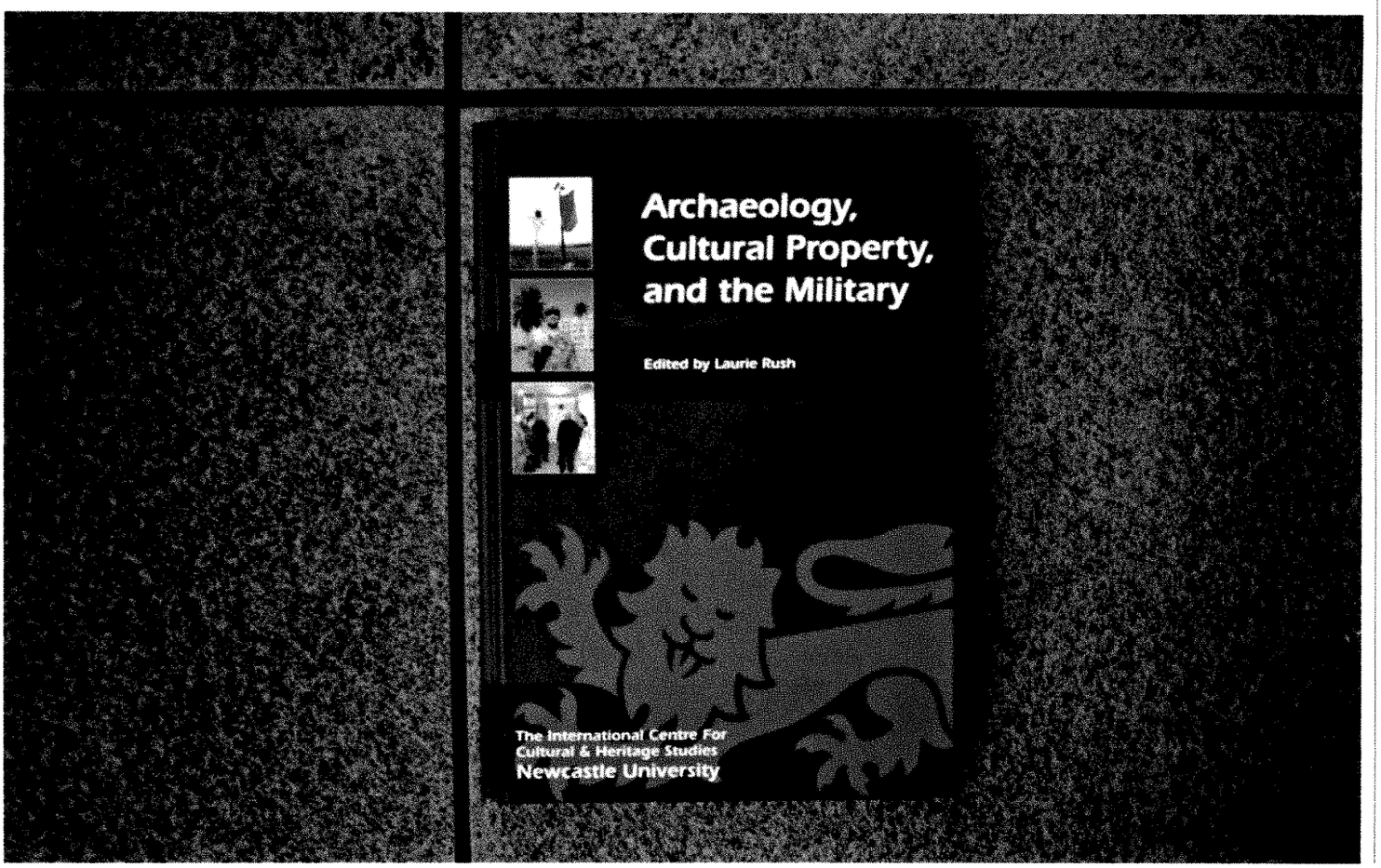
The answer to the first, the authors suggest, is lack of awareness at all levels of the military, so it follows that the second question can be addressed by educating those who plan and participate in military action. The problem with this analysis is that, as Lawrence Rothfield demonstrates in his 2009 book The Rape of Mesopotamia, it wasn't so much that they didn't know, they just weren't interested.

The authors' rubric seems that, yes, it was all a terrible foul-up, but everyone has learned important lessons and we have better procedures to make sure it won't happen again. However, the evidence in the book hardly supports such optimism.

Why have the US and UK, the principal external powers responsible for the 2003 invasion of Iraq, still not ratified the Hague Convention and its two protocols, which oblige military powers to protect cultural property during armed conflict? The US military is so concerned that it committed all of $60,000 in 2010 to international cultural resources cooperation.

Most galling of all is that we used to do it so much better. One chapter provides a riveting account of the measures taken by the western allies during the liberation of Europe in the second world war to safeguard and repatriate art stolen and hidden by the Nazis. The monuments officers, immensely resourceful academics embedded in the Allied Expeditionary Force, discovered, documented, protected and returned thousands of art objects to museums (the stolen property of individuals is still being sorted out today). Their ability to improvise was spectacular. Works of art were protected in transit using German sheepskins, rubber boots and gas capes.

What gives this book an edge is that, like the Thieves of Baghdad by Matthew Bogdanos, it is written by people who have rolled up their sleeves and got stuck in to



protect cultural property where the cavalry rode roughshod. It left me deeply respectful of their achievements despite the odds.

These attributes are exemplified in the editor, Laurie Rush, who has won the trust and recognition of the military and archaeological establishments. The case is made for archaeologists imported into the military to be given sufficient training and rank to have clout, "sadly very necessary in an organisation so driven by, and so deferential to, rank". The precedent exists for medics and lawyers. Akin to the monuments officers of the second world war, such specialists have one mission only: to protect cultural property.

The last chapter discusses the ethics of collaborating with the military, particularly where the writer disagreed strongly with the invasion of Iraq. She decided that a greater good would be served by contributing her expertise than remaining above the fray.

The book is enlivened by personal narratives that describe the realities of working in hostile territory. Airman First Sergeant Pinckney, a conservator with archaeological experience, took on the task, beyond his military duties, to document and safeguard the sites at the US airbase at Kirkuk. The obstacles he had to surmount included a commander who told him "I need a first sergeant... not a first archaeologist"; archaeological kit that went astray in the chaotic US army mailing system; and scorpions, venomous spiders and snakes that inhabit the nooks and crannies of archaeological sites.

As one author points out: "If war destroys a group's past and related cultural memory, even in part, the loss is often felt across the globe... Standing by and doing nothing... is no longer an option."

Whether the architects of war will learn from the lessons of history remains an open question. This book at least gives the military slightly less excuse for institutionalised, brutish amnesia.

Edited by Laurie Rush, Boydell Press, £50, ISBN 978 1 84383 539 4

Tristram Besterman is a freelance adviser and writer on museums and culture

On my bookshelf

Frances Parton

Wolf Hall, by Hilary Mantel

I loved Hilary Mantel's Wolf Hall because it is a beautiful balance between research, imagination and language. Mantel's novel manages to combine incredibly detailed research with her own intense imagination and provocative language to create an utterly convincing and gripping account of life in Tudor England around the royal court during the 1520s.

The book influenced me so strongly because it shows the ability of good research to bring history to life; the book smells, tastes and sounds like Tudor England. Paradoxically, it also shows how little is known about the past. Research and imagination allow the historian to make a period their own. Mantel fills in the gaps in the historical record and brings a new approach to even such a well-known story as the relationship between Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn.

The book will always be pertinent to me because, as a museum curator, I am constantly trying to bring people and events from the past to life. It is difficult to get museum audiences to let go of their preconceptions and really imagine what life would have been like in the past.

It is so easy to forget that historical figures were real people like us, with their own lives, feelings and opinions. History is not a fixed path, events are never set, and each generation interprets the past in its own way.

Frances Parton is the curator of Wives and Sweethearts, an exhibition at the National Army Museum, London, until 30 July

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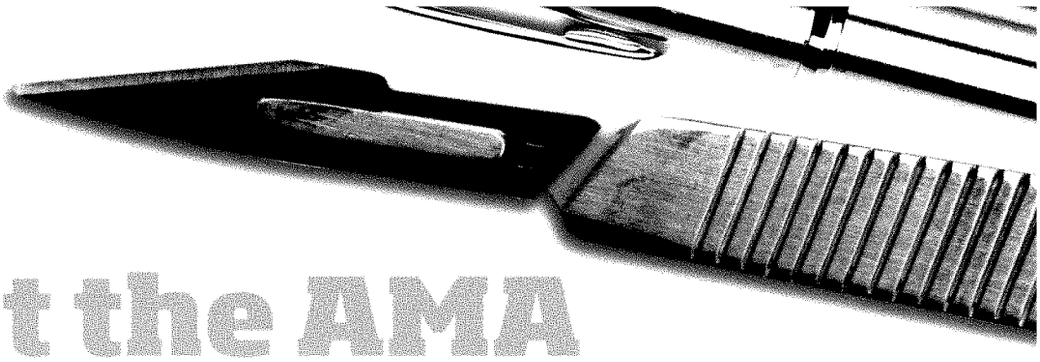
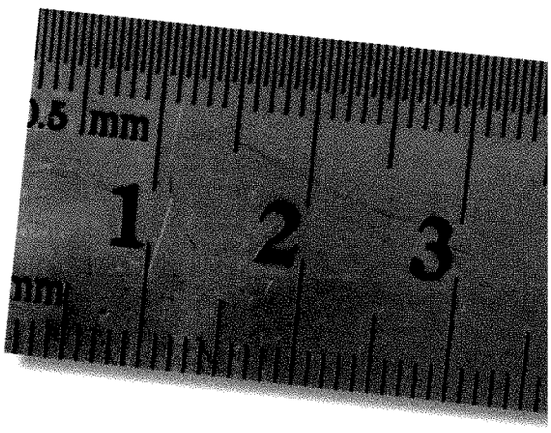
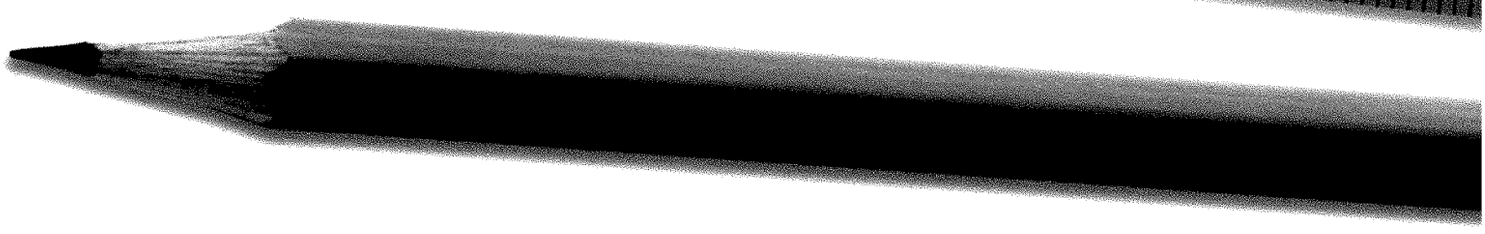


Thought the AMA wasn't for you?

Now is the time to think again.





The revised AMA still holds the same status it always did but it is now more accessible to everyone working in or for museums and has closer ties to the workplace.

No matter what your job, the AMA increases your confidence, improves your job skills, and helps you achieve your goals through your own personally tailored professional development.

AMA

Giving you the right tools for the job

Throughout the AMA you will be supported by a mentor to:

- update and improve your knowledge and understanding of important museum issues
- develop professional networks and contacts within the sector and beyond
- develop key skills and knowledge to help you achieve greater job satisfaction and improve your career prospects

Take a look at our website for more details and discover the AMA for you.
www.museumsassociation.org/ama

Tessa Sidey (1955-2011)

Tessa Sidey, curator (fine art) at Birmingham Museums & Art Gallery (BM&AG), died on New Year's Day following a long illness.

Tessa had been a member of the museum's curatorial team for almost 30 years, with a specialism in the collection of prints, drawings and watercolours. She was held in respect and affection by museum and academic colleagues internationally, both for her personal qualities and for her scholarship and dedication as a curator and art historian.

Tessa was passionate about the collections at BM&AG, and about sharing her own knowledge and enthusiasm with a wide audience. She felt strongly the importance of the museum's print-room service, which allows any work in store to be made accessible, and spent many hours showing works to visitors.

Tessa Sidey is remembered as an inspirational scholar and curator

Tessa developed the museum's holdings of works on paper through a series of significant acquisitions, particularly in the field of 20th-century printmaking, in which she had a specialist interest. She was also the lead curator on dozens of exhibitions and special displays, many of them incorporating her own new research and accompanied by landmark publications, for example, Surrealism in Birmingham 1935-1954 (2001).

In recent years, Tessa had worked with guest curators on a series of exhibitions and publications casting new light on the museum's collection of pre-Raphaelite drawings. She was also the lead curator on BM&AG's award-winning pre-Raphaelite online resource (www.preraphaelites.org).

Among Tessa's many publications were a catalogue raisonné of the prints of Michael Rothenstein (1993) and Editions Alecto: Original Graphics, Multiple Originals, 1960-1981 (2003), which accompanied an exhibition at the Whitworth Art Gallery, Manchester. She also helped to re-establish the reputations of neglected women artists including Estella and Louisa Starr Canziani and the surrealist Emmy Bridgwater.

Tessa's passion for her subject transcended historical periods and she worked with many contemporary artists, including Helen Chadwick, Jim Dine, Hughie O'Donoghue and the Canadian printmaker Jennifer Dickson. One of her final achievements, through the Art Fund International scheme, was to commission the German printmaker Christiane Baumgartner to create a major work inspired by the urban landscape of Birmingham.

Tessa was a loyal colleague and friend. Her scholarship, dedication and energy were inspiring, and will be deeply missed.

Victoria Osborne and Brendan Flynn are curators (fine art) at the Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery

© IAN STEWART

Geoff Egan (1951-2010)

Geoff Egan was the leading expert in medieval and later small finds with the Museum of London and later the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS). He pioneered liaison with the mudlarks who search for finds on the Thames foreshore in London.

Geoff played a key role in a series of catalogues on medieval finds from excavations in London, which are an essential reference for all specialists in this period.

Another area of interest centred on the lead seals that were affixed to textiles sent out in trade from the 14th to the 18th centuries: Geoff appreciated that recording the findspots of these unprepossessing objects can give us much information about the cloth trade. Geoff's study of these led to a doctorate from the Institute of Archaeology, London, and also resulted in a publication of a catalogue of seals in the British Museum.

Geoff was educated at Harrow County School and gained a place at Peterhouse, Cambridge, to study classics, although he subsequently switched to archaeology and anthropology. After graduation, he worked for a while at Kew Gardens, London, but a lifelong love of travel took him to Norway, where he worked on an archaeological excavation in Trondheim and his future career as an archaeologist was set.

On his return to the UK in 1976 he got a job as an archaeologist at the Museum of London, and he stayed there for the next 34 years. Starting on the bottom rung, Geoff worked his way up to be a fieldwork director before becoming a finds specialist.

Geoff's encyclopaedic knowledge of finds and his experience in working with the mudlarks meant that his expertise was of great value to the PAS. In 2010 he was appointed to a full-time post as finds adviser for the scheme, based at the British Museum. He said this was his dream job.

Geoff Egan's encyclopedic knowledge of finds was invaluable to the Portable Antiquities Scheme

A fellow of the Society of Antiquaries, Geoff was also a linchpin of the Finds Research Group, organising several of its conferences and speaking at more of them.

But perhaps the greatest pleasure was the Company of Arts Scholars, Dealers and Collectors, one of the newest of the city guilds. Geoff served as its master in 2009-10 and one of his proudest moments was last summer when he joined members of the guild who exercised their right as freemen of the City of London to drive a flock of sheep across London Bridge.

Roger Bland is the head of portable antiquities and treasure at the British Museum, London.
Donations in memory of Geoff may sent to the Company of Arts Scholars Charitable Trust, c/o The Clerk, 28 Aldebert Terrace, London SW8 1BJ (http://www.artsscholars.org/). A memorial event will be held at the British Museum on 24 March. Contact ccostin@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk to reserve a place

Profile Steve Little: Renaissance man

Steve Little is hub director of Renaissance South East. Prior to his appointment, he worked in the military and the defence industry, including leadership stints commissioning Nato command and control systems and supervising the rebuilding of infrastructure in post-conflict Iraq.

After your early career, you presumably joined the museum sector in search of excitement?
I spent most of 2009 trying to secure an arms deal with the Sultan of Brunei and it was largely more straightforward than managing the 70 or so projects at Renaissance South East. I took a punt with the career change; the principles of leading people are the same... and work is four miles away from home and not the other side of the world. What strikes me about museums is they don't talk themselves up, whereas in industry you're shouting from the rooftops about things that you haven't yet done.

What was your experience of museums?
I was part of the generation that was forced to go into museums at school. I came into the sector thinking it would be slow and fixated with the past. It's obviously not as dynamic as work I've previously done, but it has deep understanding of its community and that gives it a resistance to some of the political pressures it faces.

What were conditions like in Iraq?
For the reconstruction work, there was no plan, so you just used your initiative. It got quite excitable during the fuel riots in Basra and I had huge respect for the NGOs. It's easy to be brave when you have a rifle, but these guys were winning the respect of the locals by improving schools and hospitals. At first, we drove around with no body armour or weapons on view but, by the end of the tour, there were regular suicide bomb and mortar attacks. I remember being pelted with rocks by teenagers. My only real fear was making a poor decision under pressure. I still have the apprehension that I'll not lead my team as well as they deserve. I learned that you don't have to know the answer, but you do have to be decisive and always behave with integrity.

Leadership skills are transferable, says Steve Little

Any lighter moments?
An Iraqi taxi drove into us at a place in Basra where three soldiers had been recently shot. We were soon surrounded by a mob so I tried to defuse the situation. Learning that the taxi driver's name was Saddam, I announced: "The British army will not pay compensation to anyone of that name." Once that was translated to them, the crowd was in stitches.

Moves and honours

The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, has appointed one of its curators, **Ann Eatwell**, as the new Padgett and Braham curator.

Joe Cribb has retired from his post as keeper, department of coins and medals, at the British Museum, London.

Richard Pailthorpe has been appointed as the director of the Weald & Downland Open Air Museum.

Andy Morris joins the East Lancashire Heritage Railway as general manager. He was formerly managing director of Stagecoach Light Rail in Manchester and Sheffield.

Graduates from English Heritage's historic environment traineeship are now in posts. **Emma Nelson** goes to the War memorials Trust as conservation officer; **Lucie Carayon** to the Ancient Monuments Society as casework secretary; **Claire Carey** to Northumberland County Council as European marine site implementation officer; **Stuart Mee** as conservation officer at Rhondda Cynon Taff Council, Wales; **Alice Ullathorne** to Ripon & Leeds diocese as church buildings support officer; and **Joanna Burton** to Beacon Planning, Cambridge, as a heritage consultant.

Diversify graduate news: **Damon Waldock** has a temporary job at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park; and **Katherine Bradley** takes a one-year post as assistant to the keepers of the print room, the Royal Collection, Windsor Castle.

Richard Pailthorpe

Joe Cribb

New staff at the Rochdale Pioneers Museum: **Lesley Farris** joins as learning enrichment officer; **Eve Broadhurst** as arts development officer; and **Nancy Brown** as community outreach officer.

Veronica Isaac replaces **Grace Evans**, who is on maternity leave, as keeper of costume, Chertsey Museum, Surrey.

Arthur Torrington, the co-founder of the Equiano Society, has been awarded the CBE for services to black British heritage.

Sarah Staniforth has moved from her role as historic properties director at the National Trust to museums and collections director. The trust manages 142 accredited museums.

Who got the job?

Curator, John Wesley's House and the Museum of Methodism, London. Salary n/a. Advertised: MJ July 2010

Christian Dettlaff

What attracted you to the job? It was an excellent opportunity to combine curating a collection with managing a historic house in central London and to gain deeper insight into London's religious, social and political histories.

Most memorable experience in the job? Giving a presentation on the 232nd anniversary of Wesley's Chapel on aspects of the furniture collection.

Other jobs assistant curator, Victoria and Albert Museum, London; gallery and exhibitions manager, Guildford House Gallery, Surrey.

Qualifications MA museum studies, BA history and German.

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Museums Journal Jobs

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Recruitment Sales Richard Eckles
Email adverts@museumsassociation.org

HARROW SCHOOL

An independent boarding school
for 13 - 18 year old boys

MUSEUM CURATOR

The School is seeking to appoint an enthusiastic, knowledgeable and professionally qualified Curator on the retirement of the current incumbent.

Harrow School has its own museum housing a rich collection of artefacts, pictures and books mostly connected with the School, its former pupils and benefactors. It is also open to the public.

The successful candidate is likely to have a relevant honours degree and experience of working in a museum at managerial level.

The School will consider applications from candidates prefering full-time or part-time hours but with the emphasis on term-time. Candidates are asked to state their preference on application.

An attractive remuneration package is offered.

Start date: Flexible
Closing date for applications: 22 March 2011

For an application pack please contact:
Sharon Exelby, Personnel Officer
5 High Street, Harrow on the Hill,
Middlesex HA1 3HP
Tel: 020 8872 8293
personnelofficer@harrowschool.org.uk
Application packs available to download online at
www.harrowschool.org.uk/vacancies

The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and all successful applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening appropriate to the post, including checks with any past employer and the Criminal Records Bureau. Harrow School is an equal opportunities employer

www.harrowschool.org.uk

Falmouth Art Gallery
(Falmouth Town Council)

Post of Director (Full-time)
£27,849 (PO SCP 33)

Falmouth Art Gallery, located in the beautiful Cornish seaside town, is one of the leading art galleries in the South West and has won or been nominated for 18 major awards.

The gallery is seeking a dynamic and forward thinking director who has the creative vision to maintain and develop the gallery's reputation as a centre of excellence for small museums.

Closing date: 25 March 2011

For an informal discussion about the post please call Mark Williams on 01326 315 559.

For an application pack please contact Emily Middleditch on the number above or email *emily@falmouthtowncouncil.com*

Celebrating the Rich Artistic Heritage of the Fal area

CHATSWORTH

Chatsworth is embarking on a major documentation project to catalogue its important and diverse collection. In addition a new temporary exhibition gallery will open in May 2011. In order to meet these exciting challenges four new posts have been created within the Collections department. We are looking for enthusiastic and motivated individuals with experience in historic houses or museums to join the team in the following roles:

Registrar
Salary - £24,000 per annum
40 hrs per week

Educated to degree level or equivalent with proven experience of managing a busy loans programme, the ideal candidate will have experience of coordinating object movements between sites and external locations. Experience of collections management databases with loans management module would be an advantage.

Archivist and Librarian
Salary - £24,000 per annum
40 hrs per week

Educated to degree level with an archives qualification and practical experience of working with archives, the post holder will answer enquiries and oversee access to the archives and library. They will advise on the cataloguing of the collections and manage the work of the Archivists Emeritus (x 2) and the Library Assistant. An understanding of Librarianship and/or a background in the historic house sector would be an advantage.

Assistant Collections Steward
Salary - £16,500 per annum
40 hrs per week

To assist with the day-to-day care and handling of the collection, in particular the weekly clock winding and the annual cleaning of garden statuary. The post holder will prepare and retrieve objects for researchers and help with the smooth running of the department. This is at times a physically demanding role and experience of object handling and an ability to work at heights is essential.

Documentation Assistant (2 year fixed-term contract)
Salary - £18,000 per annum
40 hrs per week

To undertake cataloguing, data reconciliation and inventory tasks for all aspects of the collections. Proven experience of working with a collections management database is essential. The post holder will also be required to rationalise and enhance paper records and object files.

To apply for any of the above posts please forward your CV together with a covering letter stating your current benefits package to: The HR department, Chatsworth, Estate Office, Edensor, Bakewell, Derbyshire, DE45 1PJ or via email to *hr@chatsworth.org*.

Applicants should clearly state which role they wish to apply for.

Closing date for all the above roles is Sunday 20th March.

Job description and personal specifications are available from the Chatsworth website on *www.chatsworth.org*

HERITAGE STEWARDS WANTED AT WESLEY'S CHAPEL AND THE MUSEUM OF METHODISM

Would you like to show visitors around one of the most important Methodist sites in the world, including the 18th-century John Wesley House? Or maybe you would rather help behind the scenes and assist with the collections in store?

Wesley's Chapel and The Museum of Methodism are looking for committed enthusiastic volunteers to support day-to-day operations. This is an excellent opportunity to meet interesting visitors from all over the world, work with staff and the many other volunteers and to learn more about the historic chapel and Methodism more generally.

No previous knowledge about Methodism or experience necessary, full training will be provided. We pay travelling expenses and also offer a volunteer discount in the museum shop.

If you are friendly and enthusiastic and can you commit two days per month we would love to hear from you! For more information please e-mail *museum@wesleyschapel.org.uk* **or call the chapel office on** *020 7253 2262.*

MANCHESTER JEWISH MUSEUM

Chief Executive Officer

35 hrs pw - Salary £28,000 pa

Experience is required

Write or telephone for Application Pack
Manchester Jewish Museum
190 Cheetham Hill Road
Manchester
M8 8LW

Telephone 0161 834 9879
Mark Envelope "CEO"

Closing Date:
Monday 7th March 2011

MANCHESTER JEWISH MUSEUM

Museums Journal

To subscribe to **Museums Journal** or **Museum Practice** please email **pamela@museumsassociation.org**

www.museumsassociation.org

MJ and the MA website: the very best places for recruitment advertising

Museums Journal (MJ) magazine remains the premier choice for recruitment advertising in print. MJ publishes on the first day of every month, distributed to all Museums Association (MA) members and MJ subscribers. All jobs booked in Museums Journal are also featured online.

The MA website carries details of all the best jobs in the museum, gallery and heritage sectors. The MA site is very popular and visitor numbers are rising all the time. The jobs pages are the most visited on the site and online has the advantage of being up-to-the-minute in terms of current opportunities.

From July 2010 the **MA's e-newsletter** moved from monthly to weekly, greatly increasing its profile. With over 27,000 subscribers it enjoys very strong viewing rates and click-throughs. The top jobs of the week are displayed prominently on the e-newsletter. You can subscribe today at **www.museumsassociation.org**

MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

To download our new media pack with more details about recruitment advertising go to **www.museumsassociation.org/advertise** or phone Richard Eckles on 020 7426 6914.

Wanted: Crich Tramway Village, Derbyshire, wants volunteers to train as tram conductors on its fleet of vintage trams

Eric Ravilious' Caravans has been bought by the Fry Art Gallery, Essex, following a grant from the Art Fund

Tram conductors are wanted at Crich Tramway Village, Derbyshire, for light duties and chatting to visitors

© DACS (RAVILIOUS)

On offer

When disposing, give priority to transferring, preferably by gift, to accredited museums. Any proposed sales to other museums listed here have been judged to be compatible with the Museums Association's (MA) code of ethics. For further advice, see the MA's ethical guidelines (*www.museumsassociation.org*) or contact the MA's ethics department (020 7426 6953). More details about some of the items on offer below can be found on the MA's Find an Object listing service, *www.museumsassociation.org/collections/find-an-object*. Find an Object allows you to post adverts for disposals or loans throughout the month. All objects for sale on the Find an Object site must comply with Section 6 of the MA's code of ethics. Disposal toolkit guidelines can be found at *www.museumsassociation.org/collections/disposal*

● The Chiltern Open-Air Museum, Buckinghamshire, wishes to dispose of the following objects to any interested museum: a box mangle; one industrial sewing machine and stand; two domestic sewing machines with stands; a Drummond treadle lathe; one heavy-duty treadle lathe (in parts); two sets platform scales (one incomplete); an electric chainsaw; a hand-operated morticing machine; a **folding mangle**; c1950s; two iron mangles in poor condition; and a set of forge bellows.
Contact: Jennie Booth
email: rtefactscoam@btconnect.com

● The National Museum of Science & Industry wishes to dispose of **miscellaneous objects** from the Science Museum, London and National Media Museum, Bradford. Details on request.
Contact: Helen Thornton
email: Helen.Thornton@nmsi.ac.uk

● The Scottish Transport and Industry Collections network offers a large number of old sewing machines, **typewriters** and tools available to any interested museum as part of its Old Tools, New Uses project. Many objects are in poor or incomplete condition. Full details on request.
Contact: Jilly Burns
tel: 0131 247 4394
email: j.burns@nms.ac.uk

● The Royal Cornwall Museum, Truro, offers a **Victoria Carriage** made by the Burlington Carriage Company, 1860-80, for long-term loan. It belonged to the Williams family, a Cornish mine-owning family, and displays its coat of arms. Full details on request.
Contact: Sarah Lloyd-Durrant
tel: 01872 242785
email: sarah.lloyd@royalcornwallmuseum.org.uk

● A Boots combined ultra-violet/infra-red sunlamp with timer and a **Pifco massager** with three interchangeable heads are offered to any interested museum.
Contact: Sue Ruth
email: cbuckley.sruth@ntlworld.com

● The Thirlestane Castle Trust, Berwickshire, is seeking to dispose of a damaged porcelain figure of an **immortal on a tortoise**, Japan, Edo period, c1665.
Contact: Ian.Garner@thirlestanecastle.co.uk

Wanted

● Crich Tramway Village near Matlock, Derbyshire, wants volunteers to train as **tram conductors** on its fleet of vintage trams. The village needs a large team of volunteers to run its daily service. The job involves conducting British tramcars on one mile of running track, including taking the tram to and from the depot. Conductors are responsible for the boarding, seating and alighting of passengers, signalling to the driver, and

issuing tickets. Conductors are encouraged to chat to visitors.
Contact: Cara Marchant
tel: 01773 854321
email: enquiry@tramway.co.uk

● The National Waterways Museum, Ellesmere Port, is looking for publications related to the **canals and waterways**, old or new, that can be used in a new archive research area for visitors.
Contact: Peter Collins
tel: 0151 373 4380
email: peter.collins@thewaterwaystrust.org.uk

● The Weald & Downland Open Air Museum, Singleton, West Sussex, is in the process of re-erecting a **tin church** from South Wonston, near Winchester, and is seeking furnishings (in particular, church chairs) for it, dating from around 1908.
Contact: Carol Brinson
email: carol_brinson@hotmail.com

Export bar

● The culture minister has placed a temporary export bar on a set of **Japanese Imari** lacquered garniture (or decorative porcelain) from Diana, Princess of Wales', family home. This will provide a last chance to raise the money to keep the set of three lidded jars and two trumpet vases in the UK. This unusually large, rare and highly significant five-piece garniture, previously owned by the Spencer family at Althorp, is a spectacularly decorated example of Imari-ware porcelain made in Arita in south-western Japan. The decision on the export licence application will be deferred for a period ending on 1 April. This may be extended until 1 July if there is a serious intention to raise funds with a view to making an offer to purchase at the recommended price of £109,250.
Contact: The Secretary, the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest, Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, Grosvenor House, 14 Bennetts Hill, Birmingham, B2 5RS

Ditchling Museum in East Sussex has been awarded an HLF grant for a capital project

A set of Japanese decorated porcelain jars from the home of Diana, Princess of Wales, is subject to an export ban

Acquisitions

● Rexton Bunnett, the creator of the UK's largest private collection of **musical theatre-related memorabilia**, has announced his intention to leave the collection to the nation via the newly created Overtures: The Bunnett-Muir Musical Theatre Archive Trust. The Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) will be responsible for public access and the archive will formally transfer to the museum on Bunnett's death. Details will be on the V&A's website from April.

● A trilogy by artist **Tacita Dean** – A sequence of stones: Riesenbett II (floating), Grosssteingrab (floating) and Hünengrab II (floating) – has been acquired by Falmouth Art Gallery. The set of mixed media works was bought with help from grants of £18,000 from the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund and £17,000 from the Art Fund. The total cost was £39,500. Dean studied at the Falmouth School of Art, and still returns to Cornwall from her home in Berlin.

● A rare silver **Sea Gallantry** medal awarded posthumously in 1944 to Coastguardsman Robert Treadwell has been presented by his stepson to the National Museum of the Royal Navy, Portsmouth, along with research notes, photographs and documents. Treadwell came to the assistance of a Royal Navy crew after its boat sank in a gale. Treadwell, who drowned in the attempt, was posthumously awarded the medal.

● A grant from the Art Fund has enabled the Fry Art Gallery, Saffron Walden, Essex, to buy **Caravans**, a watercolour by Eric Ravilious.

● A **William Morris textile**, never before displayed in public, has been donated to Walthamstow's William Morris Gallery. Donated by the Monument Trust, the 13-foot-square Peacock and Bird Carpet was bought from a private collection in the US and restored before being delivered to the London gallery.

Funding

● The British Council is funding several UK museums through its **China-UK:**

MA events calendar

MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

The MA regularly organises events, conferences and seminars. For further information, see www.museumsassociation.org/events or contact: Lorraine O'Leary 020 7426 6940 lorraine@museumsassociation.org

How to create a podcast
7 March 2011, Museums Association offices, London
A hands-on training day that takes participants through the podcasting process, from creation to distribution. What works? What doesn't? Find out how podcasts are used by museums worldwide.

Making money from copyright
8 March 2011, Museums Association offices, London
This training day explores the legal and practical issues associated with rights' exploitation that can provide new opportunities for cultural heritage organisations to generate much-needed income. Run by an experienced trainer, this workshop provides an introduction to the area, while guiding participants through the issues associated with different models of rights' exploitation.

Volunteer management and the law
15 March 2011, Museums Association offices, London
This workshop will help you to understand your legal responsibilities towards volunteers and cover the policies you need to have in place to underpin volunteer involvement and include an introduction to risk management and assessment.

Changing platforms: creating effective digital content
15 March 2011, Royal College of Surgeons, London

Connections through Culture development grants. The British Museum, London, receives a grant to work with Hubei Provincial Museum; the Burrell Collection, Glasgow, to work with Nanjing Museum; the Liaoning Provincial Museum, to work with the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; the Museum of the Western Han Dynasty Mausoleum of the Nanyue King, Guangzhou, to work with the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge; Nottingham Museums & Galleries, to work with the Chinese National Silk Museum; and Orleans House Gallery, Richmond upon Thames, to work with Suzhou Museum.

● Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grants: the **Priest's House Museum Trust,** Wimborne Minster, Dorset, has been awarded £442,000 for its open learning centre project; the **Ditchling Museum**, Sussex, will receive £835,600 in a project that will combine new-build and refurbishment to allow a better showing of the museum's Eric Gill collection. The **Harris Museum & Art Gallery**, Preston, has been awarded £1.18m by the HLF to develop its new history gallery in time for Preston Guild 2012.

● Colchester and Ipswich Museums and the Bangladeshi Support Centre have received £49,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund's Your Heritage scheme to fund its **Curry and Culture** programme. For three years, a project coordinator will document the contribution made by Bangladeshis to East Anglian life.

P&O has put its archives detailing 170 years of shipping history online

Awards

● The winner of Design Ventura, a Design Museum, London, education initiative that develops student creativity and enterprise skills, is **Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham College, Lewisham**. The Year 10 pupils plan to use recycled materials to create colourful flags. The pupils receive a £1,000 bursary and a five-day programme of workshops and guidance with professional designers, to develop the bunting, which will be sold exclusively in the museum's shop from the summer. All profits will go to Greenpeace, a charity chosen by the students. Registration for the 2011/12 programme opens in May.

Staff at Chichester District Museum pack up in readiness for a move to new premises

Web news

● **Art in Yorkshire** (AIY), a free iPhone app giving details of Yorkshire-based art events in 2011, will be launched in early April. It was created by Axis, the online resource for UK contemporary art. Led by York Museums Trust, AIY involves 19 partners across the region, with additional input from Tate.

● Galleries, posters and archives relating to over 170 years of **P&O**'s shipping history are now available online.
www.poheritage.com

● The Wellcome Collection, London, has launched **High Tea**, an online strategy game based around the British trade in opium in the Pearl Delta in the 1830s, on the eve of the opium wars.
www.wellcomecollection.org/hightea

● Museums are offered free online adverts by iknow-uk to help **boost UK tourism** and to encourage family days out. The site has 18 regional websites.
www.iknow-uk.com

● **Women in Museums**, an online networking and support resource, invites women working in the sector to join it.
https://www.bigtent.com/groups/womenmuseums

Miscellaneous

● The Chichester District Museum has vacated its old premises in preparation for reopening later this year at its new, purpose-built home by Chichester Cathedral. Its collection of over 350,000 artefacts, including a **fossilised rock bun** baked in 1824, is now in storage.

© TACITA DEAN (A SEQUENCE OF STONES)

Best practice advice and new thinking on how to create effective digital content across a variety of new media platforms, including websites, mobile devices and gallery displays.

Making the case for your museum
22 March 2011, Museums Association offices
In this changing political and economic climate there has never been a more important time to make the case for museums and galleries. If you are concerned that your museum is under the radar or misunderstood, this workshop will help you understand the basics of advocacy: how to win friends and influence people.

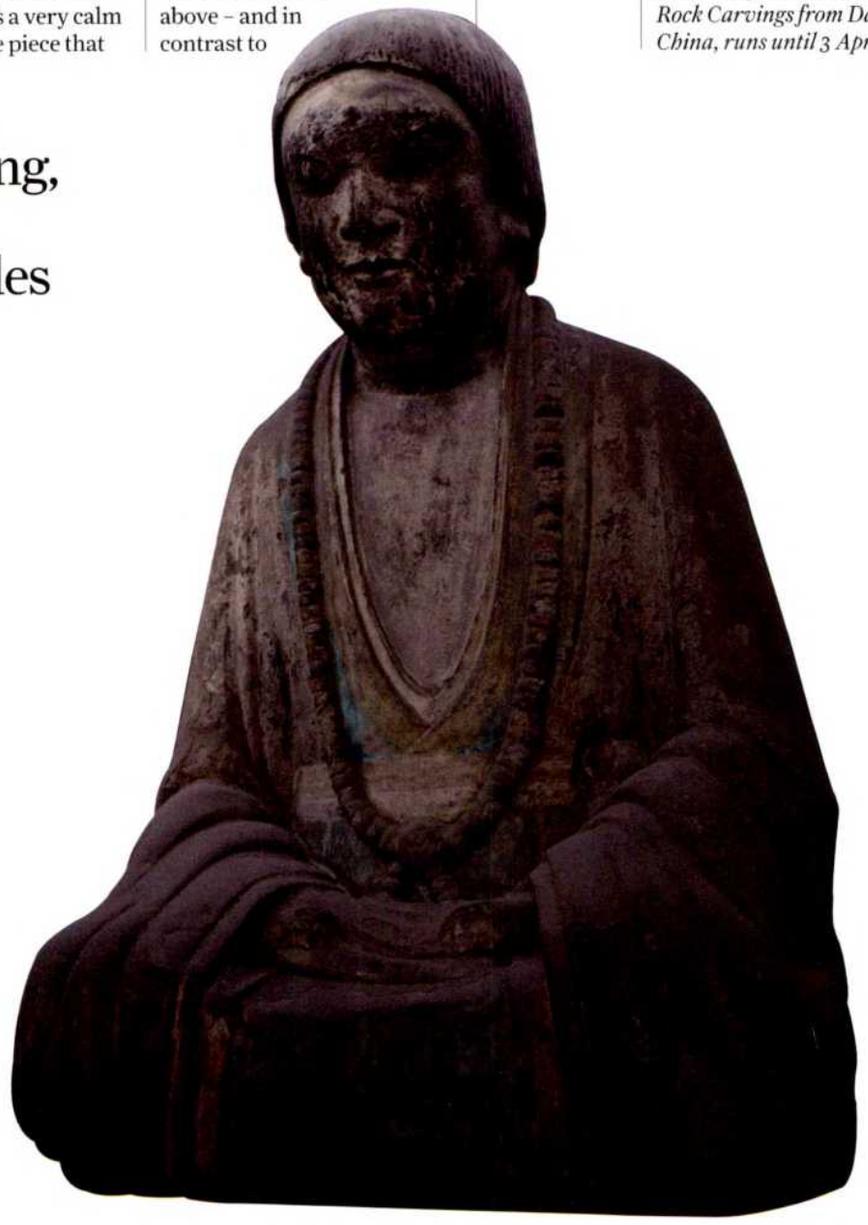
Social media and museums
31 March 2011, Museum of Science and Industry, Manchester
Social media has become an important weapon in a museum's arsenal. But how should it be used? Can you control it, and how do you find the time to monitor it and create content? This conference helps you to understand how to use websites such as Twitter and Facebook, the legal and ethical challenges involved and the potential to enhance the visitor experience.

Kevin Sumption from the National Maritime Museum, London, will be speaking at Changing Platforms on 15 March

Museums Association annual conference and exhibition
3-4 October 2011, The Brighton Centre, Brighton
This year the Museums Association annual conference runs over two days with reduced costs for delegates to attend. The event is the most important in the museum calendar and is a must-attend for everyone working in museums and galleries, and sector suppliers. It brings together professionals from across the UK to debate the latest thinking in museum practice and to discover new ideas.

Song-dynasty statue of a Buddhist meditating, Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales

Andrew Renton



"The exhibition features a selection of sculptures from temples that were exquisitely carved into the rocky hillsides of what is now a World Heritage Site in China called Dazu. It's quite close to Chongqing, one of the powerhouse economic cities on the upper Yangtze river.

Back in 2006, the Welsh Assembly and the Chongqing municipal government signed an agreement to undertake a series of collaborations, which were primarily economic but also cultural. As a result, we have this opportunity to see these figures, some of which are showing outside China for the first time.

The rock temples are mainly Buddhist in nature but also reflect Confucian and Daoist ideas as well as providing some insights into Chinese daily life.

They were carved directly into the sandstone cliffs and we have figures that have either been excavated or become detached from the rock face. They date from the middle of the seventh to the 13th century, and there are reckoned to be some 50,000 or so sculptures at around 75 different sites.

There's a Buddhist idea that repeated good deeds will accumulate you merit for your next life, so you'll find repetition of images at sites like this, the result of wealthy people sponsoring carvings to be made in the hope of being reborn into a better life.

This particular sculpture shows a Buddhist in the act of meditation. It's a very calm and introspective piece that originally came from the Baodingshan site, the largest cave temple complex, which was conceived by a man called Zhao Zhifeng.

He was born in 1159 and, as a teenager, became very committed to the Buddhist way of life, although he did not become a monk. Instead, he had the idea of a temple as a place for worship and instruction in Buddhist beliefs.

This figure is generally believed to be Zhao Zhifeng himself and so I see it, in some ways, as being at the spiritual heart of the exhibition.

At the site, this figure was placed on the lower tier of a vast relief in the rock that illustrated different Buddhist texts. On the tier above – and in contrast to this figure's peace and quiet – there were dramatic, very secular scenes from Chinese daily life, concentrating on the sacrifices parents make for their children.

The very top tier of three featured seven very large Buddhas. The Chinese have happily combined different sets of beliefs without any apparent contradiction. Religious conviction in later imperial China was very eclectic.

But Zhao Zhifeng is an isolated figure in search of personal enlightenment. I hope visitors feel a small sense of contemplation when they see him."

Andrew Renton is the head of applied art at Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales, and curator of From Steep Hillsides: Ancient Rock Carvings from Dazu, China

Interview by John Holt. From Steep Hillsides: Ancient Rock Carvings from Dazu, China, runs until 3 April

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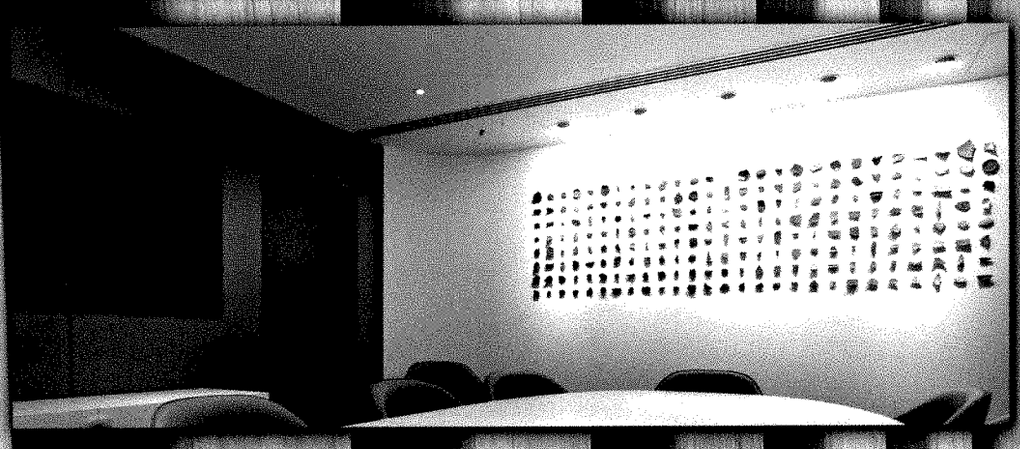

Museum Of London, Terrace Gallery

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Museums Journal

Portrait of a nation Can museums help us find out who we are?

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Editorial

Regionals need help now more than ever

Only three years ago, museums in the English regions had an embarrassment of riches.

Strategic advice was supplied by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council's (MLA) regional agencies. Renaissance hubs offered training and support, while helping to boost capacity across museums. A network of museum development officers delivered all of the above at a one-to-one level.

The picture now, and as it will emerge over the next few months, is very different. Regional agencies are long gone; hubs are being wound down and will cease to exist from June; and the immediate future for museum development officers is unclear in the hiatus between the transfer of responsibility for museums from the MLA to Arts Council England (ACE).

Last month we also learned that the skeleton staff that the MLA had left in the regions will become further emaciated, with just one relatively junior post becoming responsible for museums in each of the English regions (see news, p7).

Who will step into this vacuum? ACE is reviewing the role of core museums under the revamped Renaissance scheme, but it is becoming increasingly obvious that they cannot stand alone with no regional responsibilities whatsoever.

'Only three years ago, museums in the English regions had an embarrassment of riches'

And it would seem logical, depending on the number of core museums and their geographical spread, that they take on responsibility for managing museum development officers, rather than them being run from ACE regional or national offices that have little or no knowledge of their role.

There is also a job for the federations to do, where they exist, and for the Museums Association, which is in the process of appointing representatives in the regions and nations.

Cuts are undermining the capacity and infrastructure of museums and galleries in the regions.

A strategic approach is urgently needed to prevent the gap widening between museums with the resources to develop and those that are being left behind.

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Wakefield museums consider teaming up for a 'creative trust'

Council leader says talks are at an early stage

Gareth Harris

Yorkshire Sculpture Park, the National Coal Mining Museum for England and Hepworth Wakefield may join forces as part of a new organisation.

Peter Box, leader of Labour-controlled Wakefield Council, said discussions to establish a "creative trust" between the three organisations were in the early stages.

All three institutions receive funding from Wakefield Council.

What form the new body will take remains unclear. The new partnership could also include the Theatre Royal in Wakefield.

The Hepworth Wakefield will be the largest purpose-built exhibition space outside London

Richard Dean, deputy director of Yorkshire Sculpture Park, said: "As some of the major arts organisations in the region, we are discussing the challenges facing us all, and we will continue to work together, as we have on many occasions in the past."

A spokeswoman for the Hepworth Wakefield, which is opening next month as the largest purpose-built exhibition space outside London, issued the same statement.

Meanwhile, Margaret Faull, director of the National Coal Mining Museum for England, said: "No proposal has gone to my board of trustees, which met last week [early March], to enter into any formal arrangement, such as a trust."

MA urges Bolton to seek other ways to raise funds

Plan to dispose of 36 works does not comply with code of ethics

Rebecca Atkinson

The Museums Association's (MA) ethics committee has called on Bolton Council to undertake more public consultation and explore other sources of fundraising ahead of the sale of 36 works from its museum collection.

The council hopes to raise £500,000 from the auction. The money will be used to improve and relocate the museum's storage facility from Bolton Enterprise Centre.

Maurice Davies, head of policy and communication at the MA, said: "The committee recognised Bolton Council's commitment to provide long-term benefits by significantly improving its storage facility. However, it could not demonstrate it fully met the criteria in the code of ethics."

Concerns include the lack of public consultation and an absence of a fundraising strategy demonstrating that other sources of funding have been thoroughly explored.

Picasso's Le Picador is one of the 36 works to be auctioned

Also, one painting up for disposal is by Bolton artist Alfred Heaton Cooper, and may therefore not fall outside the museum's core collection.

The ethics committee said Bolton Council should produce two public statements explaining how the proceeds from the sale will be used and how the 36 items were selected.

The council originally selected 41 works for disposal, but removed four because further research found they had significant connections to Bolton. A further work – A Proposal by Thomas Rowlandson – was removed after experts discovered it was a copy.

The final list includes two Pablo Picasso etchings as well as works by Walter Sickert and Frederic Leighton.

Cuts start to take effect at local authority museums

Museum services are feeling the strain, as councils face up to budget cuts for 2011-12

Patrick Steel

The Museum of Croydon could be forced to offer a reduced service

Cuts monitor

Maidstone Borough Council is to merge the administration of its museum, tourist information centre and arts centre, with the information centre moving to the museum building. One vacant post at the museum was deleted in February, and the council is consulting on a proposal to make one of its three curator posts redundant and replace it with a new post of interpretations manager.

Hampshire County Council has confirmed that the Curtis Museum and Allen Gallery in Alton will move to trust status. Volunteers will run the Bursledon Windmill and Rockbourne Roman Villa, neither of which will have a curator on site.

The council has deleted the equivalent of 26 full-time posts across the museum service, including nine collections management positions.

Croydon Council is still in consultation with staff over a proposal to cut its museum service from 7.5 to 2.5 full-time equivalent posts, as part of £1.5m worth of savings across its culture department.

The Museum of Croydon would remain open, but with a significantly reduced service.

Stoke-on-Trent City Council has given Etruria Industrial Museum a six-month stay of execution, while it talks to two local groups about managing it as a trust. The museum's three full-time staff will remain in post until 1 October.

South Somerset District Council has closed its museum in Yeovil, and relocated the collections to the town's Community Heritage Access Centre, saving the council £30,000 a year. The post of outreach/education has been made redundant, but three staff will remain to care for the collections.

The Stamford Museum in Lincolnshire will close in June, and **Lincolnshire County Council** will make seven full-time equivalent posts redundant across its museum service. The management of Church Farm Museum and Grantham Museum will be taken over by community groups.

York Museums Trust is proposing to delete four part-time curatorial posts and two support posts at York Castle Museum. The full-time posts of head curator, head of collections and curator of history would remain.

Director dismissed pending police investigation

Allegations surface of unauthorised disposal of objects from BECM

Gareth Harris

The director of the British Empire and Commonwealth Museum (BECM) has been dismissed from his post following allegations of unauthorised disposal of objects from the collection.

In a story that Museums Journal broke exclusively online last month, Neil Cossons, chairman of the BECM trustees, said: "Gareth Griffiths has been dismissed as director of the BECM for abuse of his position as director and the unauthorised disposal of museum objects. We're not in a position to make further comment because of impending police enquiries."

A statement from Griffiths' solicitor, McCloy Legal, said that he had not been interviewed by the police and any objects were disposed of with the knowledge and agreement of the trustees.

"Our client will now be making an application to an employment tribunal with regard to the terms of his employment and the trustees' treatment of him under his contract. Any suggestion that our client has profited from the disposal of the collection will be vigorously defended."

Museums Journal understands that at least two items from the Commonwealth Institute collection, which was gifted to the BECM in early 2003, have been disposed of, including a 19th-century Maori wooden panel, which was consigned to auction last September.

A Nigerian model of a Royal Navy boat that patrolled west African waters

A spokesman for the Commonwealth Education Trust, which represents the Commonwealth Institute collection, said: "We want to know what the state of the collection is and what is still at the BECM."

The trustees plan to audit the collection, which is in storage and includes more than 553,000 items.

The museum closed its Bristol base in 2008 pending a relocation to London.

In brief

Sell-off raises £150,000
Leicestershire County Council has sold more than 100 works at auction that were originally displayed in schools but are now kept in storage. The sale has raised £148,650, with a painting by the late Indian artist Avinash Chandra achieving the highest price of £16,000.

Artangel in Tate donation

Nine film and video works commissioned by non-profit organisation Artangel, part of the newly formed Artangel collection, will be donated to Tate. These include Fishtank by Richard Billingham and Tony Oursler's The Influence Machine (above). From 2012, Artangel is to loan works from its collection to a network of galleries.

Volunteering awards open
The 2011 British Museum/Marsh Trust Volunteers for Museum Learning Award is open for applications. The award recognises best practice and the innovative ways in which volunteers in museums and galleries engage the public. Winners for each English region, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland will receive £500. An overall winner will receive an extra £2,000. The closing date for applications is 28 April. *www.britishmuseum.org/marshaward*

Computer centre appeal
The Centre for Computing History in Haverhill, Suffolk, has launched a Twitter campaign in an attempt to raise £1.5m for a new home in Cambridge. The institution's website says "it would be the first physical museum to be built with the help from the direct support of a virtual community". £1,233.69 had been donated as Museums Journal went to press.

Out of Africa: first major exhibition of contemporary South African photography to open at V&A

Race, class, sexuality and politics in the post-apartheid age are explored in Figures and Fictions, the first major UK exhibition of contemporary South African photography. More than 150 politically engaged works by 17 photographers, including established practitioners such as David Goldblatt and Santu Mofokeng, as well as emerging artists such as Zanele Muholi, will be on show. Zwelethu Mthethwa's series The Brave Ones shows Zulu boys dressed in tartan skirts and bow ties for an annual religious festival. The exhibition will run at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London from 12 April-17 July.

Management tools updated

Collections Trust boosts benchmarking download

Rebecca Atkinson

The Collections Trust has published updated versions of Benchmarks in Collections Care and Spectrum, which can be downloaded for free from its website.

Benchmarks 2.0, a management tool for assessing the level of collection care given to objects on display and in storage, will now be published as an Excel spreadsheet as well as a PDF. For the first time, it also incorporates the PAS197 code of practice for cultural collections management.

Meanwhile, Spectrum 4.0, which provides specification for collections management activity, has been simplified, with the 21 procedures now represented by flow diagrams.

Collections Trust is also publishing both documents on a dedicated wiki page, allowing people to suggest and discuss improvements for further editions.

English Heritage reduces hours

English Heritage weighs up opening 62 properties only at weekends

Geraldine Kendall

English Heritage is proposing to cut opening hours at a number of its properties between 1 November 2011 and 31 March 2012.

The organisation, which has more than 400 sites, is facing a 32% cut to its government grant over the next four years. It plans to introduce weekend-only opening hours at 62 properties that previously opened all week.

The move would affect only properties that charge admission, although Stonehenge and Kenwood House would be exempt from the reduction.

Kenwood House is to close for a £3.4m facelift

Most of the properties in question would still open on weekdays during school holidays. In addition, English Heritage plans to introduce weekend opening at 14 properties that normally close fully in winter, including Boscobel House in Shropshire and Yarmouth Castle on the Isle of Wight.

A spokesman said: "In light of the reduction in our grant and the savings that we have to make, we believe that this option is the best one.

"It would see more properties open in winter than ever and no sites that are currently open would close."

According to English Heritage, the proposal to reduce opening hours was in response to statistics showing that only 4% of visitors came in the winter months.

A final decision will be taken within three months.

The organisation has already announced that its entire outreach programme will be axed in response to budget cuts.

Meanwhile, English Heritage-run Kenwood House in London is to close for a £3.4m facelift. Work is to start this winter, but the house itself will shut to visitors for more than a year from next summer.

A spokesman said the decision to shut the house fully was taken because the work would have taken up to six years if it had remained partially open.

"Inevitably, there will be an impact on retail and hospitality, but compressing the works minimises these losses," he added.

ACE to reduce regional assistance for museums

MLA's area directors and regional managers to be replaced by relationship officers

Patrick Steel

Regional help for museums will be cut back under Arts Council England (ACE).

Under proposals unveiled last month to staff at the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), the MLA's area directors and regional managers will be replaced by two relationship officers per region covering museums and libraries when ACE takes over the MLA's functions this year.

ACE will create 53 posts to enable it to take over the MLA's museum and library functions. Museums will, in effect, be treated as another art form with a structure similar to dance and literature.

It is proposed that the most senior museum position will be a London-based director of museums and Renaissance. There will be a Birmingham-based head of standards with responsibility for Accreditation, Designation and the MLA's acquisitions, exports and licensing unit.

Hands-on help could be cut under new arrangements

If the proposals go through, the changeover will happen on 1 October.

MLA staff are said to be frustrated with how long it has taken for the proposed structure to be announced, and some are unhappy that ACE is looking to align museums with its own structures, rather than replicate those of the MLA.

One source said: "Whereas previously there were regional teams for, say, the whole of the north, with backup from central office, the relationship officers will not have that backup. The knowledge is not going to be there at senior level for museums."

Mark Taylor, director of the Museums Association, said: "It seems ACE is less willing than the MLA to engage with bigger local authority agendas and key decision-makers at local authority level.

"However, it's good that there will be many posts devoted to museums in the new system, and that specialist expertise will be maintained."

An ACE spokeswoman said: "ACE and the MLA have shared with staff the arts council's proposed staffing structure for the integration of museum and library roles into the organisation."

An MLA spokesman said: "The MLA and ACE have agreed a process that can enable the transfer of some MLA staff to ACE. The MLA is conducting an intensive consultation with its staff about this process, and the implications for affected individuals, and a more detailed announcement will be made in due course."

Decision to axe MLA criticised as ill-informed

Audit office cites lack of a full financial analysis

Patrick Steel

The National Audit Office (NAO) has found that the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's (DCMS) decision to close the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) was not informed by a full financial analysis of the costs and benefits.

In its 2010-11 audit report, the NAO stated: "When the department presented information on the proposed closure of the MLA, it identified the ongoing costs of the activities it wished to continue, but was not able to identify the closure costs that would be incurred, or the full marginal costs of transferring activities to Arts Council England."

Amyas Morse, head of the NAO, said: "Some decisions have been based on insufficient financial information and analysis, as exemplified by the decisions to merge and close some arm's-length bodies.

"This can leave organisations exposed and unprepared for the future, and lead to high overall costs or the displacement of costs elsewhere."

A DCMS spokesman said: "[The decisions to close or merge arm's-length bodies] have been informed by a financial analysis of the costs and benefits, but these are not the only factors taken into consideration.

The DCMS said the financial costs and benefits were not the only factors taken into account

"The department is finalising the costs of winding up the MLA. We expect this detailed analysis to confirm our preliminary assessment that it will deliver significant cost savings.

"We have been managing the closures and mergers to achieve value for money since these decisions were taken and have driven down costs and maximised efficiencies. We don't feel this has been recognised by the NAO."

In brief

Visitor numbers up 4.5%
The number of visitors to museums and galleries grew last year. According to data released by the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions, visitor numbers at the top 10 museums and galleries rose 4.5% on average. Meanwhile, culture minister Ed Vaizey has released figures showing that visits to free museums have more than trebled since 1990.
www.alva.org.uk/visitor_statistics/

ACE shuts programme
Arts Council England (ACE) has closed the Cultural Leadership Programme (CLP) after five years. The initiative, established to foster excellence in leadership in the cultural sector, was axed because of a change in funding priorities. Several of the CLP's elements, including Clore Fellowships and Clore Short Courses, will be delivered from April 2011 by a new Leadership and Organisational Development Team.

Frome Hoard saved

The National Heritage Memorial Fund has donated £294,029 to the Museum of Somerset to prevent the Frome Hoard from going to auction. Discovered by a metal detectorist in April 2010, the hoard of 52,503 Roman coins is the second-largest ever found in Britain. The museum has now raised the £320,250 needed to keep the hoard in Somerset.

Radar museum reopens
The Royal Air Force Air Defence Radar Museum near Horning, Norfolk, will reopen this month after it was forced to shut unexpectedly last summer to upgrade its fire safety systems.
www.radarmuseum.co.uk

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Falmouth Art Gallery to host major exhibition of local artist Kurt Jackson's works

Falmouth Art Gallery in Cornwall is to mark the 50th birthday of one of the county's most renowned artists, Kurt Jackson, with an exhibition of his paintings and sculptures. The exhibition features new works painted by Jackson during his time as artist in residence at last year's Glastonbury Festival, where a 12m platform was constructed to give him a bird's-eye view of the site. Much of Jackson's work celebrates the Cornish landscape, including his 2008 painting In the Cove (above). Kurt Jackson at 50 runs from 9 April-18 June.

Industrial body set up

Federation to represent eight Scottish museums

Simon Stephens

Eight organisations have set up a federation to promote the interests of industrial museums in Scotland.

Industrial Museums Scotland was suggested in a report by the Scottish Museums Thinktank, which was formed in 2009 by the Scottish government to tackle issues facing the sector.

Industrial Museums Scotland is led by the three national industrial museums – Scottish Maritime Museum, Scottish Mining Museum and Scottish Fisheries Museum – that receive direct government funding.

Scottish Mining Museum director Rowan Brown said the federation would be involved in activities such as sharing expertise, making joint funding bids and forming partnerships with organisations including National Museums Scotland and Historic Scotland.

The other museums involved are Almond Valley Heritage Trust, Dundee Heritage Trust, the Museum of Lead Mining, the Scottish Railway Preservation Society and the Museum of Scottish Lighthouses.

NMS sites to charge under-12s admission

Three museums change policy on free entry for children to compensate for budget cuts

Geraldine Kendall

National Museums Scotland (NMS) is bringing in charges for children over the age of five at several national museums to make up for cuts to its budget.

Entry for children between five and 12, which was previously free, will cost £3 at the Museum of Rural Life and £4 at the National Museum of Flight.

The National Museum of Costume has already started charging £2 admission for children over five.

An NMS spokeswoman said the move would help raise income without forcing the museums to compromise the quality of exhibitions.

"Due to cuts in our grant from the Scottish government, we are looking at a number of areas in which we can increase income generation, while maintaining the high quality of experience that we offer across all our museums," said the spokeswoman.

The Museum of Rural Life is introducing a £3 charge for five- to 12-year-olds

The spokeswoman added that the NMS had not increased VAT until 1 April, despite the national rise in January.

The Scottish government cut the NMS grant for 2011-12 by 4.2%.

Maurice Davies, head of communications and policy at the Museums Association, said the NMS move reflected the "uncertainty" facing Scottish museums.

"About a year ago, if museums were talking about charging, they were talking about reducing or abolishing charges," he said.

"This [move] shows that it is not possible for museums to absorb cuts in funding without it having an impact on frontline services."

Entry for school groups and under-fives will remain free at all three museums.

The National Museum of Scotland will continue to be free for all visitors.

ACE could sell works to finance acquisitions

Sale of works from ACE collection not ruled out

Gareth Harris

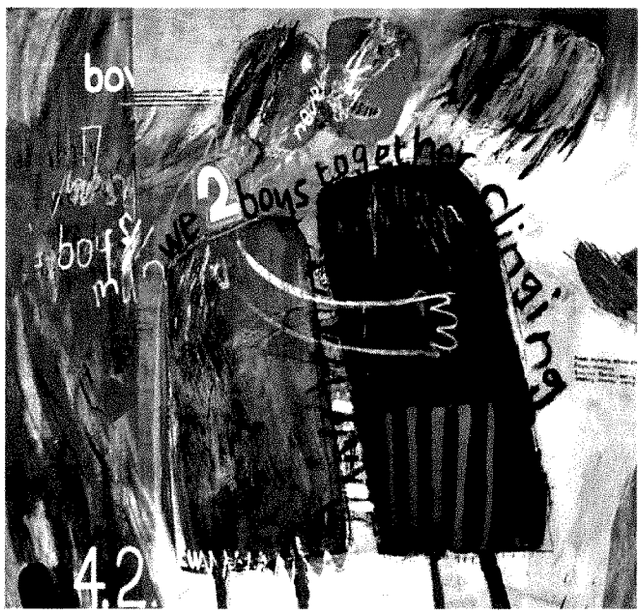
Arts Council England (ACE) may sell some of the works in its modern and contemporary British art collection to allow it to acquire other pieces.

Liz Forgan, ACE's chairwoman, recently told the parliamentary culture, media and sport committee: "I don't think we should have a rule like a museum that we will never, ever, sell anything."

ACE, the British Council and the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS), which oversees the Government Art Collection, have all subsequently agreed to review their collections, exploring "the potential for efficiencies, cost-savings and enhanced public benefit", said an ACE spokeswoman.

The ACE collection includes more than 7,500 works and the British Council owns more than 8,500 British pieces dating from the 20th and 21st centuries.

A DCMS spokesman said there were no plans to sell works from the Government Art Collection, which holds more than 10,000 items.



David Hockney's We Two Boys Together Clinging features in Arts Council England's collection

Forgan acknowledged that museums were worried about deaccessioning but said: "If you want to keep a collection that is there for the purposes our collection is there for, the collection has to renew itself."

Wendy Law, a visual-arts consultant, said it was interesting how far the stance on selling work from public collections had shifted: "It wasn't long ago when arms were raised in horror at the suggestion. Arguably a more pragmatic approach, such as that put forward by ACE, is needed if investment in contemporary collections is to continue."

At the committee hearing Forgan also talked about ACE's involvement with the Public arts centre in West Bromwich.

ACE provided £29.8m in funding for the project and a one-off £3m payment in 2009.

"We have undertaken work on the lessons to be derived from the Public, which will be published in the summer.

She said that lessons had to be learnt from capital projects and that the Public "was not a spectacular success".

Scottish museums secure £1m in funding

But acquisitions fund has been slashed by 25%

Rebecca Atkinson

The Scottish Executive has announced more than £1m of funding for museums and galleries, and confirmed that Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS) will take on a new role as national development body from April 2012.

Culture minister Fiona Hyslop said £870,000 would be made available in the 2011-12 budget for Scotland's 27 recognised collections of national significance.

A further £150,000 will be allocated to the National Fund for Acquisitions. However, this represents a 25% cut, as the fund has been £200,000 since 1996.

Hyslop also issued an update on the implementation of recommendations from last year's Scottish Museums Think Tank report.

Culture minister Fiona Hyslop

MGS is to take on the role of national development body, although details of exactly what this will entail are still being discussed.

The report also called for the development of a national strategy for Scotland's museums and galleries.

MGS has been given responsibility for the strategy, and a forum to provide support and advice will be finalised after the May elections.

Funding news

Modern language

Finding money to support contemporary art acquisitions is rarely easy, but even in these tough financial times, there are organisations that are keen to help museums.

An exhibition at Sheffield's **Millennium Gallery** features the work of Katerina Seda (until 30 May). The Czech Republic-based artist has created a work that involved hundreds of volunteers as part of a search for those individuals who best reflect the physical profile of her home town.

The work was funded by the **Contemporary Art Society** (CAS) through its Annual Award, which was created in 2009 to support a commission that will become a permanent work in a public museum's collection.

The latest winner of the £60,000 award is a joint project by the **Hepworth Wakefield** and **Wolverhampton Art Gallery**. The CAS, which is inviting submissions for 2011, also has a general scheme that helps museums acquire contemporary art. Both are open only to CAS members.

In 2010, the **Art Fund** gave £1.2m towards the purchase of contemporary art – 28% of its total grants, up from 21.6% in 2009. The charity also runs Art Fund Collect and Art Fund International, which help museums buy contemporary works.

The **V&A Purchase Grant Fund** helps regional museums buy art from any period. But its budget has been cut from £900,000 in 2010-11 to £600,000 in 2011-12 following the provisional Renaissance budget from the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council. Despite this, the criteria will remain the same.

www.contemporaryartsociety.org
www.artfund.org
www.vam.ac.uk/resources/purchase_grant

Simon Stephens

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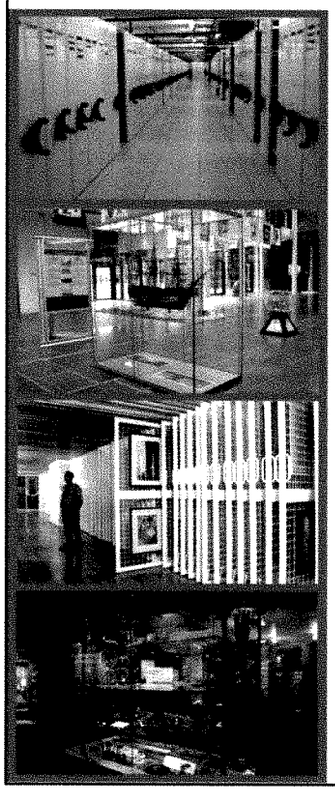

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Education projects secure £1.5m reprieve from DfE

Projects could carry on despite the Strategic Commissioning Programme being axed

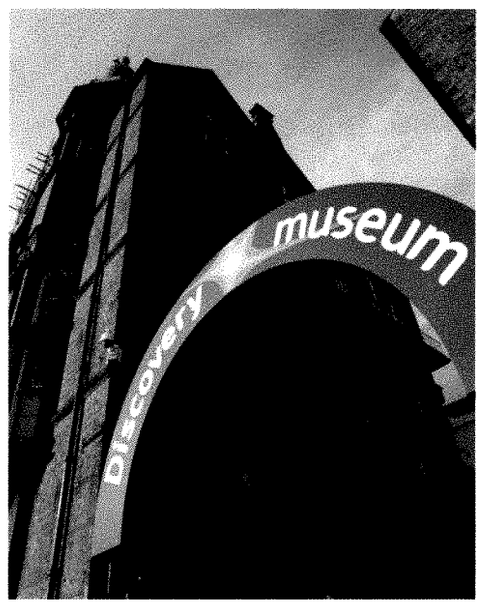
Geraldine Kendall

Some projects run by the Strategic Commissioning Programme may be given a reprieve by the Department for Education (DfE).

The Strategic Commissioning Programme, which supports education activities in museum, was jointly supported by the DfE and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).

The scheme was to be axed at the end of March, after the DCMS cut its share of funding.

But according to a source, last month the Department for Education set aside £1.5m in 2011-12 for a new initiative that will continue some of the programme's existing schemes. It will be administered by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) in 2011-12, before transferring to the Arts Council England for at least three years. A new set of schemes will be established at ACE.



The Discovery Museum in Newcastle has benefited from the Strategic Commissioning Programme

An MLA spokesman said the Strategic Commissioning Programme had come to an end, but he added that he was "optimistic" that the DfE would find resources to continue some museum-related projects.

"Nothing is confirmed yet, but we are still in talks with the DfE with a wish to find funding for museum-related schools activities," he said.

Iain Watson, director of Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums, welcomed the possibility that the DfE may sponsor a project supporting museum work with schools and young people.

"[The Strategic Commissioning Programme] has provided a significant development for learning staff in museums across the country and has led to some groundbreaking projects with real benefits for learners," he said.

It is not yet clear which projects may get a reprieve, as the MLA was consulting with existing schemes as Museums Journal went to press.

Iraq museum director dies

Donny George dies in exile in the US

Patrick Steel

Donny George, the former director of research at the Iraq State Board of Antiquities and Heritage, who was in post during the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, died last month in Toronto.

The 60-year-old, who was born in Habania, Iraq, began working for the antiquities board after gaining undergraduate, master's and doctoral degrees in archaeology from Baghdad University.

After the Iraq National Museum was looted at the start of the 2003 war, George helped to recover many of the 15,000 missing objects, continuing to champion the museum even after the country's instability forced him into exile in the US in 2006.

Before he left, George was also instrumental in establishing an archaeological police force and beginning repair works on the museum.

He is survived by his wife and three children.

World news digest

Australia: The Collections Australia Network, which enabled small institutions to promote events online and provided information for sector volunteers, has closed. The organisation responsible for funding collection projects since the mid-1980s, the Cultural Ministers Council, is also set to shut in June.

China: Norman Foster has won the competition to design a masterplan for the $2.8bn West Kowloon cultural district in Hong Kong. The 40-hectare site will host 17 cultural venues including an opera house and the M+ museum of modern art.

Egypt: The minister of antiquities, Zahi Hawass, has resigned, saying on his website that following the uprising in January, he "cannot stay in Egypt and see antiquities being stolen when [he] cannot do anything to stop it". He said the Egyptian army was no longer protecting heritage sites or the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. Hawass said that 18 objects were stolen from the Egyptian museum, while 70 had been damaged.

Hungary: The Hungarian government has scrapped plans to redevelop Budapest's Museum of Fine Arts. The project involved creating an 8,000sq m extension underneath Heroes' Square, where the museum is located. But the ruling party is thought to favour an extension above ground. EU funding for the €15m scheme had been secured.

Netherlands: The reopening of the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam has been further delayed after the main contractor, Midreth, was declared bankrupt. The project includes the refurbishment of the museum's original 1895 building and a new wing designed by architects Benthem Crouwel.

Qatar: The Museum of Islamic Art in Doha is hosting the first major exhibition of Dutch Old Master art in the Gulf. The Golden Age of Dutch Painting: Masterpieces from the Rijksmuseum, which runs until 6 June, features 44 paintings by artists such as Frans Hals and Rembrandt.

Johannes Vermeer's The Love Letter features in an exhibition at the Museum of Islamic Art

US: The Museum for African Art, which will open its 7,000sq m building on New York's Fifth Avenue this autumn, has received a $3m donation from the Ford Foundation.

Compiled by Gareth Harris. Seen in the Art Newspaper, New York Times, Guardian, Wall Street Journal and www.significanceinternational.com

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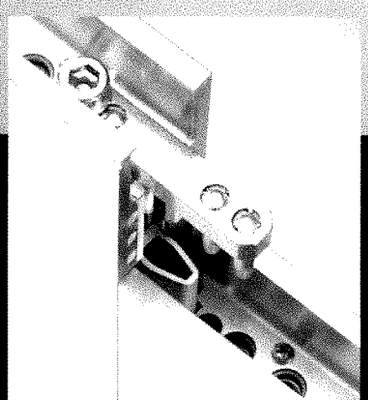

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Banking on tourism growth

Tourism strategy welcomed but worries about cuts remain

Simon Stephens

Last month, British Tourism Week aimed to raise awareness of the size, value and importance of the UK's visitor economy.

Government figures show that tourism is the country's sixth biggest industry and accounts for almost £90bn in direct spend each year. It includes more than 200,000 businesses and provides 4.4% of the nation's jobs.

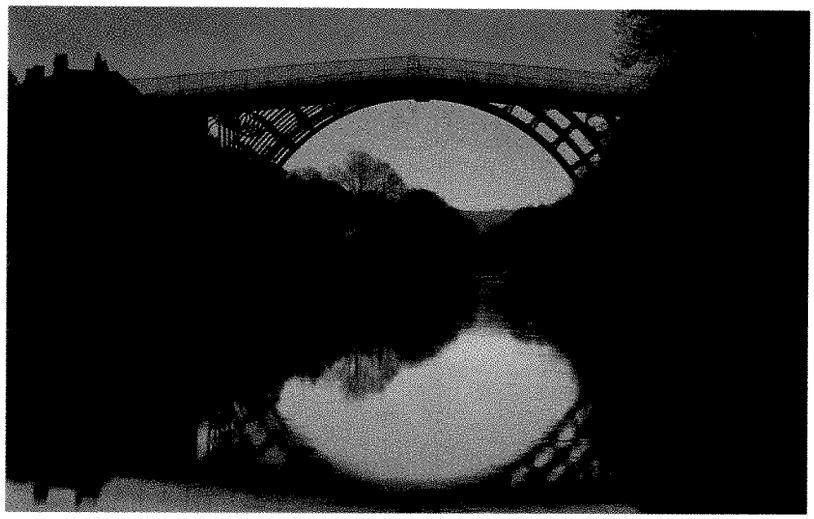
Museums are a vital part of the UK tourism industry. Figures from the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions (Alva) show that eight of the most visited London attractions last year were museums or galleries. The most visited venues outside London are those run by the National Galleries of Scotland, according to Alva.

The coalition government is thought to be taking tourism seriously. Prime minister David Cameron gave a speech in summer 2010 at London's Serpentine Gallery where he said that tourism was an overlooked giant within the UK economy and that it needed a new strategy to support it.

The new strategy was published last month. One of its goals is to build on the momentum created by the London Olympics and develop a £100m campaign to attract four million extra visitors to the UK in the years following 2012. The government says that if this is successful it will create more than £2bn extra spend in the economy and 50,000 jobs.

But some in the sector feel the government's backing for tourism is being undermined by cuts in public sector spending that are hitting support for the visitor economy, particularly at local and regional levels.

Local tourism information centres (TIC) are often vital to smaller museums as they provide a reliable source of information for visitors. But some TICs are being closed while the future of others is under review. They are often funded by cash-strapped local authorities and there is no statutory requirement to provide them.



Ironbridge Gorge Museums Trust is hopeful the government's new tourism strategy will help it attract more visitors

A December 2010 survey by the Tourism Company showed that a third of respondents were looking to make cuts to their TIC service. Nearly 20% of respondents were planning to close one or more TIC.

Regional tourism structures have also been hit by government cuts, particularly the abolition of the regional development agencies, which funded and coordinated tourism strategies in the regions.

The UK tourism strategy calls for tourist boards to be replaced by smaller, more focused, industry-led partnerships between tourism firms and government. Whether the government's plan to create what it calls "destination management organisations" works or not, the immediate problem is that these new bodies will take time to develop and could leave a vacuum at local level.

Despite this, there is much in the new tourism policy that museums can support. One of the aims is to increase the proportion of UK residents who holiday in the UK to match those who holiday abroad. For longer stays of four nights or more this would mean 29% of travellers holidaying in Britain rather than just 20% today.

Research just released by market research agency BDRC Continental shows that the appeal of the UK among Brits is rising. It found that almost half of the population are seriously considering staying in the UK for their main holiday this year compared with 39% in 2010 and just 29% in 2009.

Our national obsession, the weather, is also referred to in the tourism strategy. The aim is to help the tourism industry market more destinations around all-weather products, with museums being one of the most obvious examples.

Whatever the weather, the UK's attractions, including museums, seem positive about the prospects for visitor numbers this year. An Alva survey of its 42 members, which manage a total of nearly 1,600 tourist sites, found that 35% thought that 2011 would be better than 2010 in terms of visitor figures and only 7% thought it would be worse.

This points to a buoyant tourism sector but there are still concerns that government cuts will hold back progress. In addition to the local authority reductions in tourist spending, cuts of 34% for VisitEngland and VisitBritain were announced last year.

The Tourism Alliance, which represents 200,000 businesses in the sector, has said that these budget reductions are at odds with Cameron's comments that tourism represents a huge economic opportunity. Tourism Alliance chairman Ken Robinson has argued that the cuts are short-sighted and will hamper the growth in tourism and its role in rebuilding the economy.

Many involved in tourism, including museums and galleries, are hopeful that the big events outlined in the government's tourism strategy, such as the London Olympics, will have a lasting legacy in terms of increased visitor numbers from home and abroad. But this optimism is tempered by the fact that cuts could undermine this legacy.

Visits in 2010	Total	%+/-
Top 10 London attractions		
British Museum	5,842,138	+4.9
Tate Modern	5,061,172	+7
National Gallery	4,954,914	+3.7
Natural History Museum	4,64613	+13.2
Science Museum	2,751,902	-0.5
V&A	2,629,065	+16
National Maritime Museum	2,419,802	+2.19
Tower of London	2,414,541	+1.04
St Paul's Cathedral	1,892,467	+4
National Portrait Gallery	1,819,442	-7
Top ten attractions outside London		
National Galls of Scotland	1,281,465	+10.18
Edinburgh Castle	1,210,248	+1
Chester Zoo	1,154,285	-6.8
Kelvingrove, Glasgow	1,070,521	-21.75
Roman Baths, Bath	1,054,621	+2
Canterbury Cathedral	1,033,463	+2
Merseyside Maritime Musm	1,027,475	+9
Stonehenge	1,009,973	+2
Eden Project, Cornwall	1,000,511	-2.7
Wisley (RHS)	803,986	-16.2

Source Association of Leading Visitor Attractions

Dancing stars are born from a little chaos

Lucy Shaw

The financial shock waves are taking a painful toll on our sector. The future seems so uncertain – what will be left, and what, if anything, can we do? Actually, there is a lot we can do. We just need the chance to stop, think, talk to each other, and be inspired.

The temptation when times are hard can be to hunker down and retreat to conventional ways of doing things. But real change happens when the status quo is no longer an option. Tough times can spark creative and dynamic thinking about purpose, vision and ways of working.

Next Top Model: Creating the Museums of the Future is one of the themes at this year's Museums Association (MA) conference in Brighton (3-4 October). This strand will offer the chance to explore our sector's future through innovative thinking and new business and management models.

The MA has first-hand experience of positive change and fresh ways of working through its Smarter Museums programme (2009-10). The programme supported ten museums to change their internal culture by improving the ways people work together. Smarter Museums created opportunities for people to work collaboratively and differently – it pushed them to think about alternative models for managing their organisations. The working practices introduced through participating in the programme have resulted in stronger organisations, better placed to face the difficulties that lie ahead.

Missons Models Money (MMM) shares the MA's thinking that, despite cuts in public funding, and potentially more far-reaching challenges ahead, such as unsustainable economic growth, dwindling resources and climate change, there are opportunities to be taken. Fiona Ellis, chairwoman of the Capital Matters task force, sets out MMM's two causes for optimism in her forward to the Capital Matters report: "First we have found examples of where arts and cultural organisations have already anticipated the sort of change required and are evolving their business models. Secondly, we subscribe to Nietzsche's notion that 'one must always have a little chaos in oneself in order to give birth to a dancing star'. Within this turbulence we have an opportunity to create a forward-looking, national long-term policy and support framework for the not-for-profit arts and cultural sector in the UK."

Next Top Model will explore the possibilities that lie ahead for our sector – we want you to think big and talk big. Sessions will take you from thinking about what the museum of the future could look like, to discussing and sharing practical applications for new business and management models. It will offer you bite-size training opportunities in the Smarter Room where you can try out new ways of working to take back to your museums.

Clare Cooper, from MMM and co-author of the Capital Matters report, will join us alongside other colleagues with skills and expertise in developing organisations and managing change to explore and discuss new visions and opportunities. Other sessions will look at how we work with our people – reinvigorating management models and working practices – exploring new business models and sharing expertise. It will give us the chance to take stock and think together about effective management and business models, which we need for our organisations if we are to survive and perhaps even flourish in these tough times.

Lucy Shaw is a cultural consultant. She is coordinating the Next Top Model theme at the Museums Association 2011 conference. For booking details, see p57. www.museumsassociation.org

The diary of a national museum director *Part 11*

I hate these calls from Bullingdon, the Minister's special adviser. Last week he complained that I'd raised nothing for the Museum of British History from private donors. "Talk to Sir M," he said. "He knows how to do it."

I saw Sir M in his stylish office, furnished with contemporary art. This month it is large pieces of raw meat, suspended from hooks around the walls, and riddled with maggots. After 30 days it will be expertly butchered and served to potential donors.

"I'd like you to meet a friend of mine, Igor K," said Sir M, introducing a large man in a black-leather coat, accompanied by an attractive female translator and four bodyguards.

"Igor has lots of money accumulated through an 'interesting' past. He has a proposition for you."

"Igor's friend, Mr P, is a respectable wealthy collector in America," explained the translator. "Mr P will 'lend' you his unique collection of British underwear and McGill postcards, and Igor will give £10m to you, if you will house Mr P's collection in your museum.

"All Igor asks is that you invite his good friend Prince Andrew to be patron, and allow Igor to hold discrete private business events featuring models, with and without underwear, in your museum."

"The rest is easy," said Sir M. "Jeremy's Philanthropy Fund will match the £10m, and you get the money for your capital works from the lottery. Then, ten years later, Mr P takes his collection back, now worth a lot more, and you still have your building! Simples!"

"Everyone's a winner," laughed Sir M, "Except the people of Britain, and who cares about them?"

PAUL BOMMER

Cultural learning is too valuable to lose

John Reeve

This is not a whinge or special pleading at a time of savage cuts, but a wake-up call about cuts in funding to learning services in museums, galleries and heritage.

These appear to reflect a shift in attitudes to learning and a step back to earlier assumptions about where learning belongs. Not only are learning and outreach posts going, but whole departments and teams. That is even before the full impact of the cuts is felt nationally and locally.

First to go was the outreach team and the recently appointed education director at English Heritage. Next we hear that more than ten posts in the learning and interpretation departments at the Royal Armouries Leeds are being cut; apparently a new "visitor experience" team will include an "educational offer" from September.

Experienced frontline staff are being removed or downgraded and their work and programmes tossed away or radically changed. Is this what the government anticipated for public service delivery?

Many members of the Group for Education in Museums (GEM) are wondering what will happen to their jobs or freelance work. Learning and outreach were already often being delivered on the shaky basis of short-term contracts and project funding, and relied on a pool of highly experienced freelance and part-time workers and, of course, many volunteers.

The impression is that a learning department is core and essential one day (and its work highly visible in funding applications, performance indicators and annual reports) and isn't the next, when the budgets change. There will be many more cases like this when the cuts to Renaissance bite and nationals, trusts and local authorities experience more pressure on core budgets.

OK, the museum manager asks: "What do you expect me to do?" Our answer is to look at the future, and look at your audiences that you depend on for your ongoing income and support. Remember how long it has taken to undo the damage to museum learning, to community involvement and audience expectation from the previous Tory cuts.

As in other areas of public policy, there seems to be a lemming-like acceptance of an ideological and fiscal crusade as inevitable. It isn't. There are choices and they don't have to mean closing or cutting successful learning departments that have brought in greatly increased numbers, engagement and income from schools, families, adults and sponsors.

We can only hope that some of the enthusiasm that Michael Gove, the secretary of state for education, showed for music education recently also greets the second Henley review of cultural learning, which is being watched carefully by all of us in a campaign that is being spearheaded by the Cultural Learning Alliance.

John Reeve is the chairman of the Group for Education in Museums

The insider

You pays your money you takes your choice

Maev Kennedy

I've got it, by Jove, I've got it. It's been keeping me awake at night, but I really think I've cracked it.

I read Tristram Hunt's article on introducing admission charges to museums many times in the sleepless small hours. Obviously, I am a bear of very small brain and he is a bear with a brain the size of a honey mountain but, with the rushlight flickering, other than understanding that bushels of loaves and fishes should be removed from the Nicholases Serota and Penny, and left as food parcels on the doorstep of the People's History Museum, I was struggling.

It just all seemed a bit tricky. It's clearly unfair if the people of the West Midlands soon have to choose between paying to see their Staffordshire Hoard at the Potteries, or seeing it for free at Birmingham, so I wondered if the most equitable answer wasn't to round up the Frome Hoard, Winchester Gold, Alfred Jewel, Mappa Mundi, the lot, move them to London and charge there for them, leaving some attractive card-mounted photographs to be inspected for free in the provinces.

But then Hunt says, "naturally", schoolchildren and students, and residents once a week, should get in free, and I started to toss and turn again. What about these pesky foreigners the government says keep signing up to fake courses? Do they get in free as students?

And what about Russian billionaires living for a day or so a year in an entire street of knocked through mansions? Do they get in free too if they turn up on the right day with their electricity bills?

Shouldn't there be a sliding scale for schools, so that pupils from a bog standard comprehensive get in when the doors open in the morning, but the Oratory lot are only let in free five minutes before closing time?

And then it came to me: a way of targeting charges so that only adults, all in work, all guaranteed regulars and so unlikely to be put off returning, pay. Simple to administer, simple to collect: charge the museum staff for admission.

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Tell your own story before others do it for you

Paul Fraser Webb

A recent article in the Guardian stated it is the government's intention that every public service could be put out to tender. It explained: "A private company – or in theory a very large charity – can challenge any service they would like to run and bid to take it over. If Serco or Capita think they can turn a reasonable profit from cherry-picking anything the council or the government runs, they will have the right to demand it is put out to tender."

Outsourcing companies running heritage services might sound far fetched, but it is not. A single report may sound like speculation, but I have had two separate reports from different museum bodies that outsourcing firms are already looking seriously at tendering for the delivery of museum services. Is this the future you want?

One of the wonderful things about being a freelance museum adviser is working with truly inspiring and engaging people. Everyone working in museums is an expert storyteller. Get the right person with the right object and narratives flow, explaining the importance and significance of the object within any given scenario.

Considering this, it is surprising so many museum professionals are not confident when creating narratives for their museums as institutions. What's more, they are too willing to accept the narratives that have been created by others.

I have had several conversations, usually at local authority museums, where talk about the future is met with a certain passivity, a shrug and a statement that "they" (an ill-defined group including government, councillors and directors) haven't informed the museum yet. Many museum professionals seem willing to simply wait until they are told the narrative that they will be existing in.

But the new narratives cascading down from central government are still forming at a local level and may not be set for another six months. True, the themes are known (localism, big society, commissioning and delivery units – all things that museums have being doing for years, albeit under different names), but the details and models are still open to influence. The issue now is, do you want to form the narrative, or are you going to wait for others, perhaps profiteers, to do it?

I'm not going to tell you what narrative you should have for your museum: that is for you to decide. Whether you want the status quo or need a new model, then develop that narrative and engage, explain and advocate for it.

If we have six months until the new narratives are formed then we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to influence the outcome. After all, if you don't push for the model that works for you, somebody else will develop a model. And it may not be one that you like.

Paul Fraser Webb is a cultural consultant and collections development adviser

From where I'm standing

A recent return of human remains tells a moral tale of patience and power

Felicity Heywood

And the world keeps turning. A cliche perhaps but that's how it felt when I heard about the Natural History Museum's (NHM) decision to return 138 human remains to their descendants in the Torres Strait Islands.

This is massive and fantastic. Massive because of the sheer number of human remains being returned – the majority of the NHM's holdings from the Torres Strait Islands. (The museum still has 33 hair samples, and which institution they will go to is under discussion.)

And it's fantastic because it reminds us that nothing stays still. Power relationships shift. There is no doubt that the steady campaigning by Aboriginals over decades, and more recent UK and overseas governments' dialogue that has led to the signing of treaties, instrumental working groups and increased knowledge about the oldest living culture on earth, has contributed to the shift.

There must have been many tipping points along the way but one of them surely was NHM finding itself in the High Court in 2007 when the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre refused to allow its ancestors to be part of a scientific study. This resulted in all Tasmanian remains being returned – most without scientific intervention.

I attended the High Court and later the press conference that announced the return and the significant change in the air was almost palpable. The NHM, which still wanted to dictate what would happen to the remains in its contemporary charge, had realised, perhaps been forced to see, that there were others to be listened to. Other museums, less consumed by scientific testing, had realised this much earlier.

There were tears of joy from the Torres Strait Islanders at the news that they are going to get their families back.

The islanders spokesman said it is no longer about blame. I agree. But the NHM must be careful in its ongoing relationship with the Torres Strait Islanders that dialogue is two-way and that actions should instil faith that listening and respect are now stable mates in every museum's practice.

Science museums are incapable of organising inspiring shows

Ken Arnold and Thomas Söderqvist make some useful suggestions in their manifesto for creating engaging science, technology and medicine exhibitions (*Museums Journal February 2011, p22*). But is this a serious call to action or just some fanciful ideas about what science museum displays might be like in an ideal world? Sadly, impressive museum exhibitions and displays of science and technology are in short supply in the UK.

Our museums of science and technology have seriously lost their way in the last 15 years. They are torn between the staid approach of the past, with dreary technical displays, and an urge to transform themselves into hands-on science centres for children with as few real objects as possible.

Most science museums are apparently not interested in the inspirational, challenging shows using original material that Arnold and Söderqvist advocate. Their collections are banished to stores and the only engagement offered to visitors is through physical interactives and computer screens.

It may be significant that the science exhibitions Arnold and Söderqvist admire most could all be characterised as crossover shows where science is presented as creative art or design. Non-scientists often find the subject unappealing, so a more artistic approach may be one way to attract new audiences, though it is clearly not the only solution.

The UK's science museums need to find a new vision, bringing in ideas and experience from outside their own ranks. They seem to be short of creativity and effective leadership.

I feel encouraged by the appointment of Ian Blatchford, the new director for the National Museum of Science and Industry, who was one of the team responsible for transforming our struggling national arts museum in South Kensington, and has now crossed that great arts and science divide, Exhibition Road.

The Victoria and Albert Museum was in a pretty dark place 15 years ago, but the application of a carefully worked masterplan has taken it to the top of the class in the last ten years. Meanwhile, the Science Museum has stayed in the doldrums for a decade and still seems uncertain of its future role. It looks tired and chaotic, with some of its galleries virtually unchanged since the 1980s.

But this is not just an issue for the big nationals; it's a problem for all our museums of science, industry and technology. They need to adapt or die. It's time to follow the arts with some serious creativity and show that science is not just stuff for kids and nerds.

Oliver Green, research fellow, London Transport Museum

A cheap practice

I have become increasingly convinced that some museums are using internships as a way to save money without reducing services. There has been a noticeable increase in the number of internships on offer which, on the face of it, looks like a positive attempt to provide training opportunities.

However, the specifications for these posts are more akin to those you would find in job adverts. A recent advert for a metals conservation intern at the National Maritime Museum, London, listed a conservation degree as desirable. Surely somebody with a degree in conservation is over-qualified for an internship? Some of these internships seem to be nothing more than a way of recruiting qualified individuals at cut-price.

There is also the issue of who can actually afford to do an internship. Museums want to be more diverse and encourage people from all backgrounds into the sector. Yet only those with some kind of financial backing can afford to spend several months on an unpaid or expenses-only internship. If museums are really committed to attracting people from all backgrounds, they should at least offer minimum wages for internships.

Several institutions have argued that internships provide skills and knowledge that will be useful to people's museum careers. In principle, yes they do, but as to the usefulness, I am less convinced. Finding a museum job is hard enough in the current climate. There are less and less openings available and a surplus of highly qualified people fighting for them. If people with years of paid experience and a degree or two under their belt are having trouble finding a job, what hope does an intern have?

Until there is more job progression, museums will be faced with a growing pool of qualified people going for the same low-level positions. In those circumstances, offering unpaid internships on the premise of career-changing skills is just a con.

Lauren Woodard, assistant curator, Royal Air Force Museum, London

Post dated

Collecting the mail near Rhyddu, North Wales, 1934

Weight of words

I was interested to read about the use of Scots in the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum, Alloway (*Museums Journal December 2010, p22*). I imagine it will add greatly to the resonance of the displays.

It did, however, remind me of a visit to the West Highlands when I was harangued by a pompous young man from Stirling about the way "you English" had cleared the Highlands. At the time I just smiled and let it go, but I

later did a bit of background reading and could find hardly anyone from England who was directly involved (apart from the Duke of Sutherland). The Highlands were cleared on behalf of the local chiefs, and the men who did the dirty work mostly came from lowland Scotland and spoke a dialect of English.

My point is that the dialect spoken by Burns, which sounds so earthy and artless to most modern English speakers, might well in the same era have been understood by a poor Highlander as the language of the oppressor. Perhaps this is why museums have so often been used to proclaim fairly simplistic national and regional identities, because it is inherently difficult to weave complex nuances into a limited exhibition word count.
Fred Hartley, keeper, collections, Leicester County Council, heritage and arts

Curatorial shifts

Did anyone remember to accession a curator? This might seem like an odd question, but in the last 20 years or so there has been a substantial reduction in numbers. At times, one might be forgiven for thinking an ideological purge has been in progress. So why has this happened? Surely museums need a level of collection expertise to operate with competence and public confidence?

Maybe the answer was revealed at a conference I attended last year. A speaker, who works at an elevated position in heritage, questioned the very purpose of collections. As austerity bites and proposals for mothballing collections are tabled, perhaps they were right. What are collections for? Why do we need curators?

The heritage sector would do well to remember that collections are the unique selling point of museums. When a positive museum story hits the national headlines, it usually concerns objects that have captured the public imagination – just think of the Staffordshire Hoard. Having curators who have a genuine knowledge base from which to interpret objects, is key to a museum's credibility.
Name and address supplied

In the May issue of Museums Journal

- **Campaigning museums**
- **History of science exhibitions**
- **Interview: Michael Portillo, chairman of the Art Fund Prize judging panel**
- **Reviews: Egyptian gallery, Ipswich Museum; Atmosphere; Exploring Climate Science, Science Museum, London; Melton Carnegie Museum, Leicestershire**
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Vox pop

Are museums exploiting interns?

David Saunders *keeper, department of conservation and scientific research, British Museum*

"The overwhelming majority of interns in the department of conservation and scientific research at the British Museum are fulfilling a compulsory element of a first or higher degree course in conservation or conservation science, putting into practice the theoretical framework gained in earlier terms at teaching institutions in the UK and worldwide.

We believe internships are mutually beneficial; we gain from the intern's fresh outlook and the work they conduct under supervision on the collections, while the interns benefit from the opportunity to work alongside expert conservators and gain hands-on experience in a large museum, dealing with the complex range of activities with which they will need to be familiar in future careers."

Luciana Berger *Labour and Co-operative MP for Liverpool Wavertree*

"When I asked government departments how many interns they used, I also received answers from organisations linked to the department for culture. I was surprised at how many interns museums and galleries rely on.

Nine months unpaid is exploitation, not experience. Public bodies should be more responsible about internships that only people with London addresses and without caring responsibilities can afford to take.

The Museums Association has highlighted the importance of a wide diversity of staff in order to ensure museums stay relevant to the UK population. Work experience is crucial to the learning process and beneficial to both student and organisation, but when opportunities are only available to a select few it can do more damage than good."

Fernanda Fain-Binda *arts and media liaison officer, King's College London*

"Internships are seen as a rite of passage into an overqualified and underpaid industry. Museums and galleries see interns as 'volunteers' but the difference is that an intern aims towards a full-time paid job.

Museums want people who can hit the ground running and will fit in with their own unique management; the only way a jobseeker can fit this profile is by taking on work experience and cultivating insider contacts. Sadly, a lack of relevant work experience counts against applicants for actual jobs.

If there were flexible, part-time jobs that developed management or curatorial skills in museums, and that required enthusiasm and interest rather than substantial experience, there would be another way in for aspiring museum workers."

Victoria McGuinness *projects manager, Ashmolean Museum and University of Oxford Museums*

"You need experience to get a job in museums, but you need a job to get that experience. Working as an intern is an essential part of gaining employment in this sector and this is why museum studies postgraduate courses include an obligatory two-month internship.

I began the internship programme at the Ashmolean in 2008. Having been an intern in the past, I knew that well managed and supported interns not only benefit the museum, but also enable those individuals to gain experience in a very competitive environment. This is not exploitation, it is a two-way street. Museums invest significant staff-time in training interns, and interns gain much-needed hands-on experience. This definitely helps them in their future career in museums."

Ecclesiastical ON YOUR SIDE WHEN YOU NEED THEM

In any walk of life, insurance is something that you have but hope you don't ever need. When you do need it, you really want to feel that you are dealing with an insurer who is on your side. If you are insuring a museum and its contents, you particularly want an insurer who understands the complexities of the operation – both the historic and financial value of its contents and the commercial imperatives that drive its day-to-day activities.

Ecclesiastical is an insurance provider well versed in things historic. Established in 1887 to protect the Anglican Church, Ecclesiastical now insures many of the UK's most historic stately homes, museums and iconic buildings. With this pedigree, one thing that the company understands is that when dealing with any heritage property there is no 'one size fits all' insurance solution.

Insuring some of the country's most precious collections, a key asset for Ecclesiastical and its clients is its dedicated team of fine art experts who work with curators and owners to ensure that the best and most cost-effective insurance cover is in place. The Ecclesiastical heritage team understands that art valuation can be very complex and can offer advice on the best options for insuring specific pieces. They also understand that public access is the lifeblood of a museum and, in the unlikely event of a major incident, they know how important it is that once the damage is contained and exhibits secured things can return to normal as quickly as possible.

A flood at Firepower

One of the museums insured by Ecclesiastical is Firepower, the Royal Artillery Museum, home to the Royal Artillery's regimental collection which has been open to the public since 1840.

The museum is housed in the historic Royal Arsenal at Woolwich, which during a severe summer thunderstorm suffered flood damage. During the storm, the sheer volume of rain that fell in a very short period overwhelmed the museum's gutters and rainwater ran through the ceilings of several of the buildings. When the staff was able to inspect the damage, they discovered that rainwater had accumulated below the floor of the auditorium in the main exhibition building, home to an interactive exhibition using sophisticated electronic systems to simulate battlefield conditions, carpets in other buildings containing historic gun carriages and cannons were flooded and there was damage to the museum's offices and archives.

Bringing out the Big Guns

First thing on the following Monday, the call was made to Ecclesiastical. Tim Fitzjohn of Firepower's insurance broker S-Tech was there and explains what happened next: "The initial response was very fast and Ecclesiastical's appointed loss adjuster appeared on the scene within two hours. More importantly, he was empowered to make decisions there and then so that damage limitation could begin immediately."

Gallery Hall at Firepower Museum

One of the museum staff's immediate concerns was for some huge and difficult to move historic gun carriages standing on the flooded carpet. The carriages themselves were undamaged but the worry was that if they stood in water for too long, water would soak into the wooden wheels.

Tim Fitzjohn: "As the gun carriages were undamaged, technically there was nothing for the loss adjustor to do, but he immediately understood the implications of leaving them where they were and authorised the museum to use their own preferred contractors to move them. The scope of all of the work needed was agreed on site and the museum didn't have to wait for head office approval before taking action which was hugely important."

"On our side"

Eileen Noon is CEO of Firepower and runs the museum with colleague Jenny Branscombe. She says: "We could have been looking at a very long, drawn-out process but instead we knew exactly where we stood from the moment the loss adjustor arrived on the scene. He not only had the authority to agree necessary actions, he also understood our concerns and priorities. With Ecclesiastical which, like us, is owned by a charity, we very much felt that we were working with a like-minded organisation that was on our side."

David Bonehill is Claims and Risk Services Director with Ecclesiastical and explains how the Firepower experience typifies the company's approach to museum cover: "Every situation is unique and it is vital that we work in sympathy with the objectives of our customers. We understand that in these difficult times funding is always under pressure. With Firepower, the customer asked for an interim funding of £20,000 to cover the works, which included specialist repair of the sophisticated electronics systems. We knew it was vital that the work was carried out by experts and that it was done quickly so that the museum could get back to normal business and we agreed the payment."

Flexible cover

A major advantage of Ecclesiastical's specialist approach to heritage insurance is that it is prepared to be flexible and work with its customers to match their needs. While the priority is to protect the rich heritage of our nation, Ecclesiastical knows that in practical terms, there are always budget constraints. Policies are tailored to meet the individual needs of museums, who only pay for the cover they need. If required, Ecclesiastical will incorporate a large deductible, first loss or restrict cover to include restoration only.

As a broker specialising in museums, Tim Fitzjohn of S-Tech has worked with Ecclesiastical for over five years. He says: "It is important to us to have insurance providers who speak the same language as our clients. Ecclesiastical understands what goes on in museums and can see things from both the commercial and the heritage point of view. They way that they dealt with the Firepower flood claim from initial notification through to final settlement was totally effective and sympathetic."

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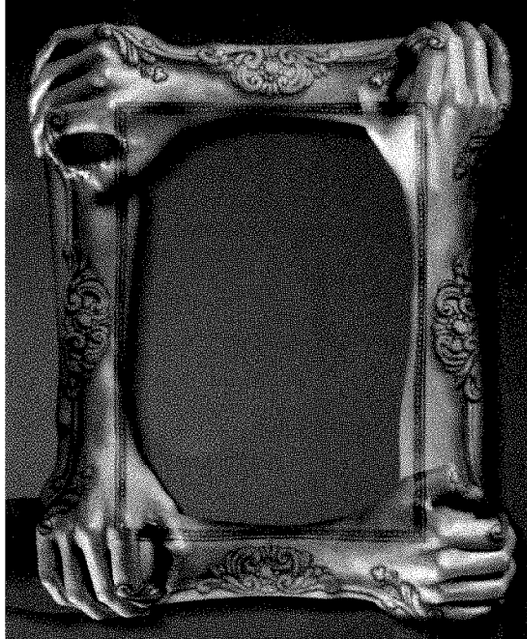

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Nation building

With devolved government elections taking place next month, the debate over how museums reflect the complex issue of national identity has been rekindled, as *Gareth Harris* finds out

Left: Colchester Castle Museum is one of the 60 UK museums involved in the various projects that make up Stories of the World, the MLA-initiated Cultural Olympiad programme

CENTRAL LIBRARY UNIVERSITY OF CALCUTTA

It's more than 10 years since devolution in the UK, but the role that museums play in meeting the needs of new national agendas remains a sensitive subject. The three devolved nations, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, all operate their museums in different ways, and reflecting identity has created different challenges in each country.

"When the National Museum of Scotland opened in 1998, it dealt with the 20th century through a gallery of design icons, as if it was unable to deal with Scotland's fairly traumatic history in this period," says Mark O'Neill, the director of policy, research and development at Glasgow Life, the trust that runs museums for Glasgow City Council. "It took almost 10 years to change this into Scotland: A Changing Nation, in 2008, a gallery that is reasonably up-to-date in representing cultural diversity in Scotland."

The next big Scottish institutional flag-bearers will be two redeveloped museums in Edinburgh: the National Museum of Scotland, which is undergoing a £46m expansion into the old Royal Museum building that will be unveiled on 29 July; and the £17.6m redevelopment of the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, which opens in November.

John Leighton, the director general of the National Galleries of Scotland, says that changing displays at the portrait gallery will offer "critical perspectives and layered narratives" from the past and the present.

"Part of our aim is to help the public form their own minds about what it means to be Scottish, to be British, to be European in a modern global society," Leighton says. "In Scotland, our national collections have always been a focus for pride, ambition, or distinction, but we would never describe them as 'national identity' projects."

The National Galleries of Scotland is funded in accordance with the arm's length principle, although national pride and the geographical proximity to the seat of power can make for a complex relationship with government.

The museum landscape is changing in Scotland, with culture minister Fiona Hyslop inviting Museums Galleries Scotland, a membership organisation that also distributes government money, to draw up a national strategy for museums and galleries. The move came after a 2010 report called for a framework for sustainable museum development across the country. The report said a national strategy should redress the balance between local authority, independent and national provision.

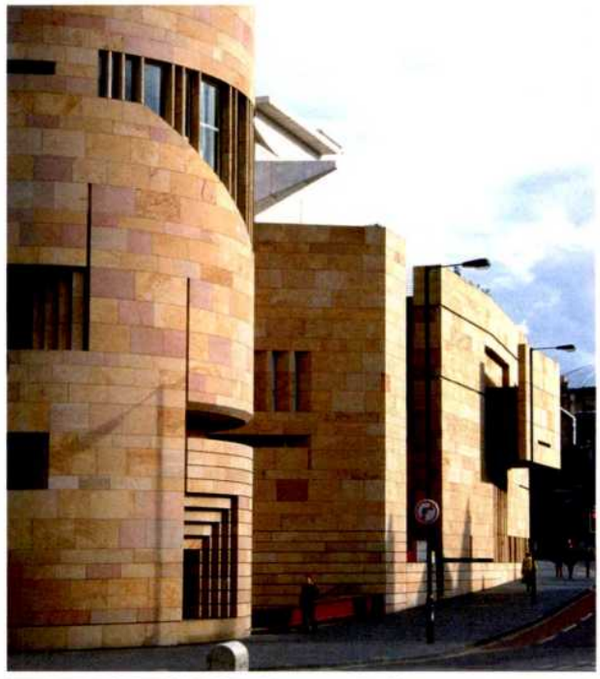
'St Fagans was conceived as a mirror to the Welsh nation'

In Wales, the museum infrastructure is perceived to be closer to government than in England. CyMAL: Museums, Archives and Libraries Wales is the agency that deals with museums and it is in effect an arm of government. As a result, grant criteria tends to fit in with national agendas. There is already a national museum strategy in place, points out Rachael Rogers, president of the Federation of Museums and Art Galleries of Wales. The strategy focuses on the effective management of collections, access and defining a distributed national collection.

One big project that will deal with questions of identity is the redevelopment of St Fagans National History Museum. The site on the edge of Cardiff opened in 1948 to help preserve Welsh traditions and language.

David Anderson, director general of Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales, says that national identity is central to the redevelopment of the museum.

"St Fagans was conceived as a mirror to the nation but also as a mirror to a particular interpretation of Welsh identity rooted in a politically liberal and rural context. More recently, it has reflected a Wales that is industrial and multicultural, and will present identity as negotiable, not monolithic," says Anderson, who adds that the wealth of non-material culture, including oral history at St Fagans, provides a new way of examining national heritage.



Left: the National Museum of Scotland, which will unveil its expansion into the former Royal Museum building in July. Below: the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, which is undergoing a £17.6m redevelopment, will offer new perspectives on what it means to be Scottish

Rhiannon Mason, the director of the International Centre for Cultural and Heritage Studies at Newcastle University, has written about the relationship between the national museums and government in Wales. She says that National Museum Wales has at times aligned its strategic priorities with those of the Welsh Assembly government in relation to identity.

"Since devolution, it is evident that there has been some linking of aims between the two, but in a fairly open-ended way," says Mason. "What is the role of the public museum? There should be sufficient distance [from government] to allow public museums to serve the public interest rather than party political needs."

This issue was highlighted last spring in Belfast when the Democratic Unionist politician and minister for culture, arts and leisure, Nelson McCausland, wrote to the trustees of National Museums Northern Ireland (NMNI), calling for more prominence to be given to the Ulster-Scots story and the Orange Order in NMNI displays.

"I raised these issues to ensure that national museums' exhibitions fully reflect the historical, cultural, religious and political rights of all citizens of Northern Ireland within the context of a shared future," McCausland told Museums ▶

Experts' choice: key national identity projects of the past decade

Rhiannon Mason, senior lecturer, Newcastle University
"The new Galleries of Modern London at the Museum of London effectively tell stories of different identity groups in a way which highlights their complexities."

Vanessa Trevelyan, head, Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service
"The British Empire & Commonwealth Museum in Bristol [now closed]; Norwich Castle's Viking and Anglo-Saxon Gallery, which explores the issue of migration and how successive waves of settlers have made us the people we are today; and the Great British Art Debate, which involves Tate, Norfolk Museums & Archaeology Service, Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums, and Museums Sheffield."

Mungo Campbell, deputy director, The Hunterian, Glasgow
"The 2007 commemoration of the abolition of the slave trade provided a rare window for organisations of every size to examine an issue which is now understood by a far wider spectrum of the population to have been an immensely powerful social, economic and cultural influence."

Jonathan Williams, keeper of the department of prehistory and Europe, British Museum, London
"There's a really significant role for national/regional partnerships in connecting stories of local and regional to national (and indeed international) identity. The displays at the Shetland Museum and Archives are a great example of this, as is the refurbished Yorkshire Museum's new Roman gallery, which was developed in partnership with the BM."

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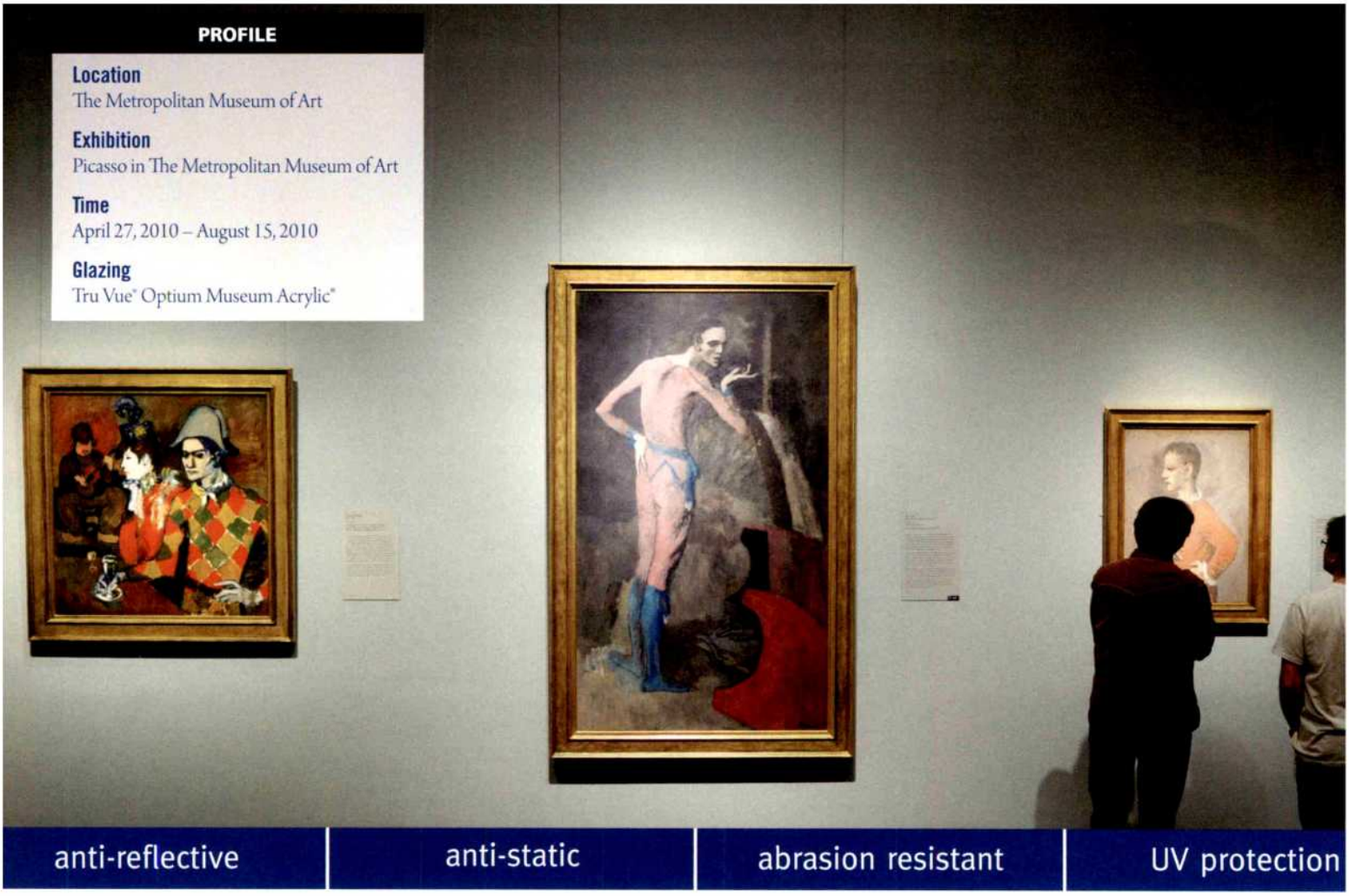

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Right: the Ulster Museum has to negotiate sensitive histories in its national identity debate. Below: Abernodwydd Farmhouse is part of St Fagans, which is being redeveloped to deal with contemporary notions of identity

Journal. He has prioritised the creation of a policy framework for the development of Northern Ireland's museums over the next 10 years that considers historical complexities and a museums strategy was published in March.

NMNI is currently undertaking an evaluation of the refurbishment of the Ulster Museum, which reopened in 2009 after a £17.9m revamp. McCausland says the review has been expanded, at his request, "to consider matters such as curatorial interpretation and presentation".

Is there a danger then that politicians could try to politicise cultural institutions? A group of French academics think this may be the case with President Nicolas Sarkozy's plans to convert the National Archives building in Paris into a French history museum.

Sarkozy's aim of "reinforcing national identity" at the new museum prompted protests from nine eminent historians, who insist that Sarkozy will endorse a "narrow" agenda at the planned institution.

Could there ever be a British equivalent of the grandiose French scheme? A £150m museum of "Britishness'" was championed in 2007 by the then prime minister Gordon Brown and former Tory minister Kenneth Baker.

A Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) report commissioned by the department for culture in early 2009 recommended that the proposed scheme should be a digitally-led partnership body with no building or collection. None of the proposals have been implemented and the report was shelved.

Baker told the Museums Journal: "When Brown discovered that words were not enough and some state support would be necessary, his enthusiasm waned. A pity, as it would have been a good legacy for him."

Politicians seem keen to address the question of identity. In a recent speech, prime minister David Cameron said that state multiculturalism had failed. But O'Neill at Glasgow says that sitting on the fence is the real problem.

"Because national museums claim to be apolitical, they can celebrate identities in a very multicultural way, but there is no evidence that they have any intention of trying to challenge divisive identities or promote a Cameronian vision of British citizenship," says O'Neill.

'Is there a danger that politicians could politicise museums and galleries?'

Britain's place on the planet is at the heart of Stories of the World, a Cultural Olympiad scheme launched in 2009 by the MLA, which involves 60 museums.

Isobel Siddons, MLA's programme manager for 2012, says: "Exploring our national identity in an outward-looking way is our focus."

What is obvious is that the identity issue is a conversation in progress. The challenge for national museums is to follow and engage with the dialogue.

Gareth Harris is a freelance journalist

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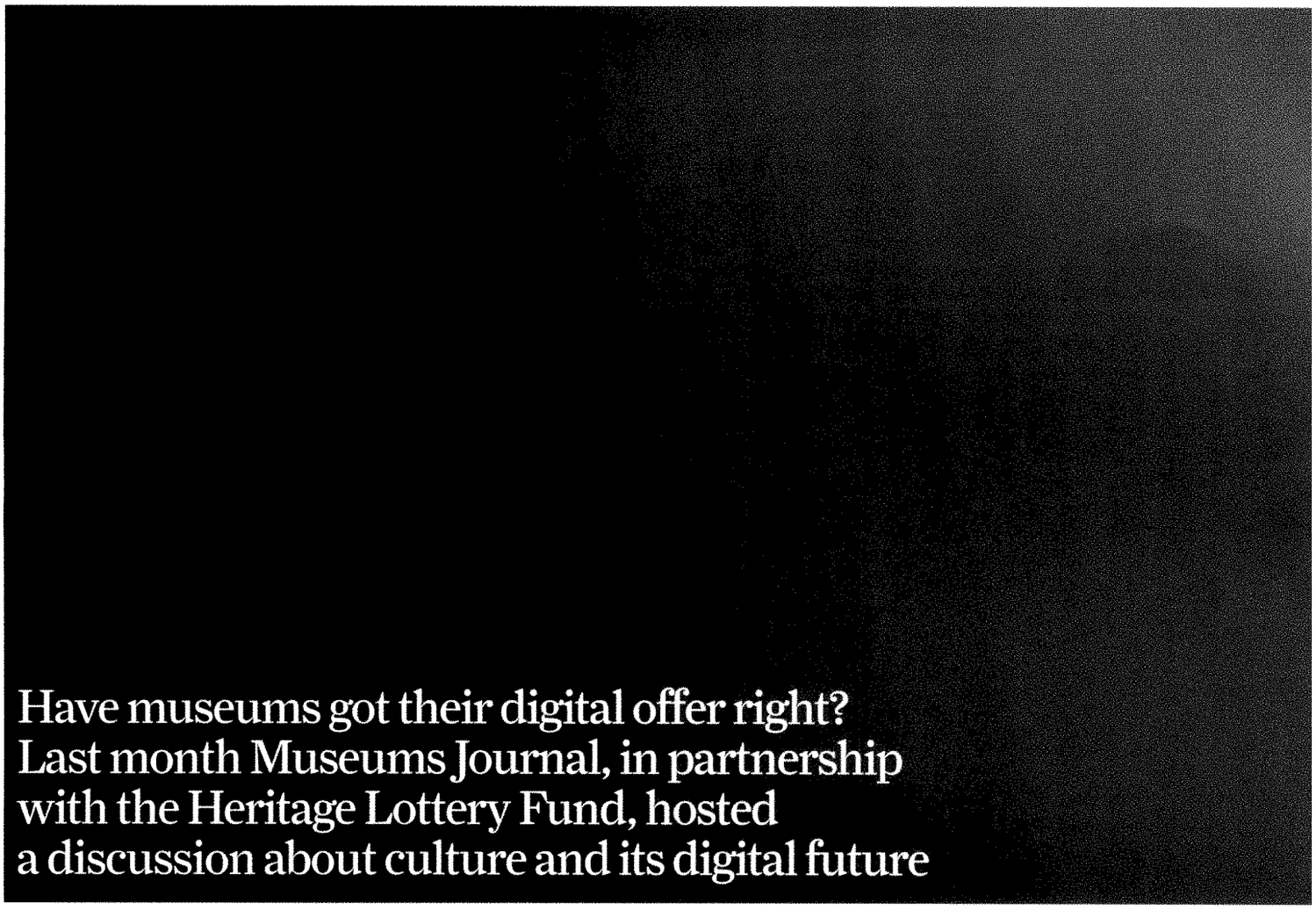


Have museums got their digital offer right? Last month Museums Journal, in partnership with the Heritage Lottery Fund, hosted a discussion about culture and its digital future

Digital roundtable

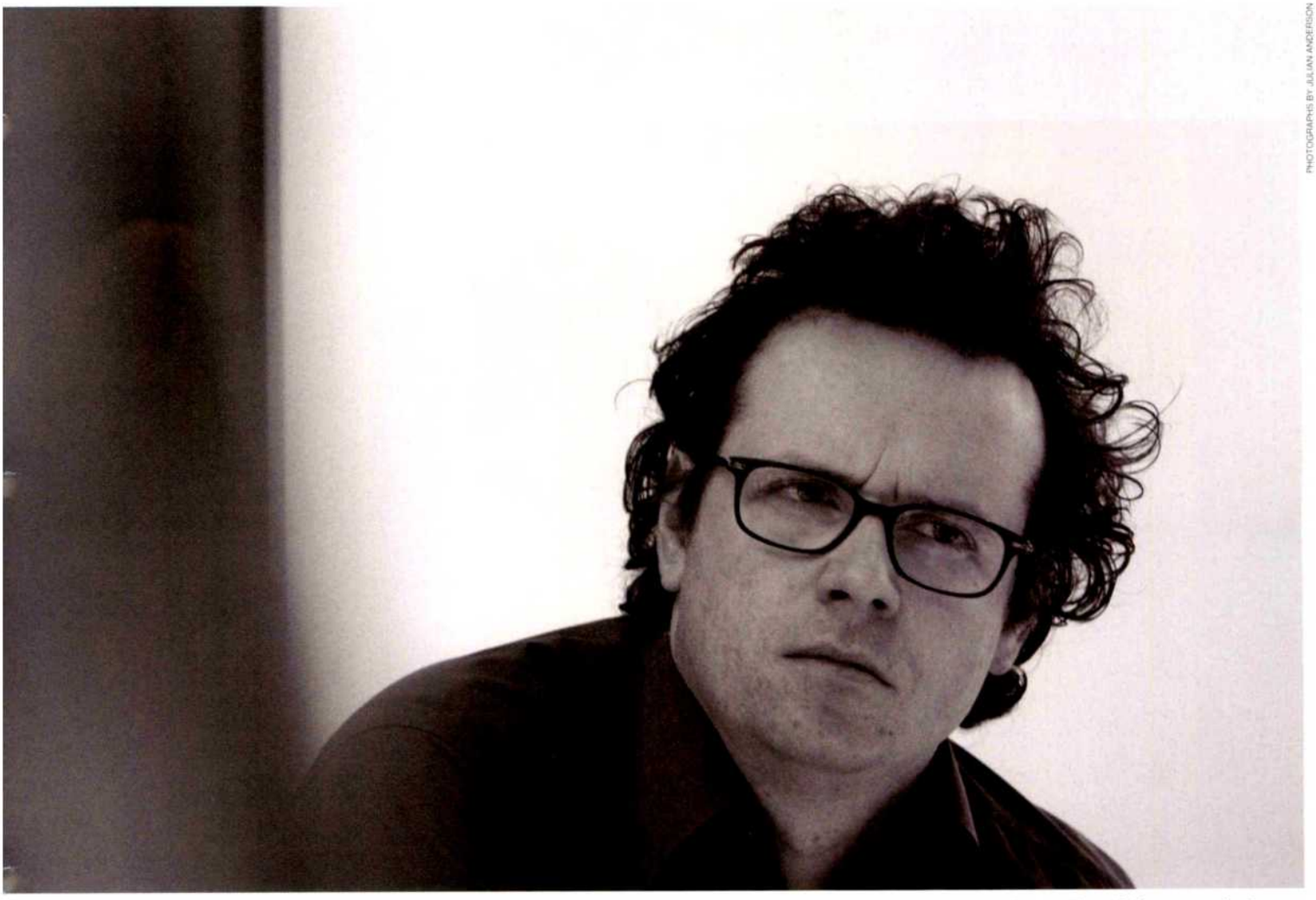
Museums Journal: What are the barriers to digital innovation?

Jim Richardson: Time, is what you always hear: "We want to do this but we do not have time." But the organisations that are doing really well, and the people who are keen to do it, they aren't working 9 to 5 – they will take a bit of work home with them. If people want to really get ahead, that's what they have to do.

Ross Parry: There are 2,400 museums, 1,700 of those are accredited. That means that there is a group there that aren't meeting basic standards in many parts of their provision. We know that there is a shining group of around 30 stunning national museums with talented media teams, that are innovating. We know of that other chunk in the middle, four or five hundred local authority museums, where there is neither the expertise in the building, nor the authority. A picture starts to emerge of a very large sector that doesn't have the time, the space or the expertise.

Gail Durbin: One of the barriers is fear and museums have to work very hard to try and shed that fear. They cannot control things once they become digital. You have to try to get yourself in a state of mind where you're prepared to lose some of your power in order to gain so many other things. One of the great things you can do with digital is you can start to get your visitor and their expertise used. People have been talking about this for years, but they never do it. Why not? It is easy to start very, very simply. Even if you have only got a computer and somebody who knows how to work it, your visitors can send you an image, and you can do something with it. You do not have to have vast amounts of money.

Adrian Friedli: The fear factor is allied to a capacity issue, as in: "We cannot begin to work out how we would take this on." If every organisation, big or small, tries to grapple with these issues on its own, then they will stay locked in fear or worrying about capacity. If there are ways of brokering conversations, working together, within small groups of organisations or across common issues, then there can be a sharing of knowledge and resources that starts to make these things feasible. The experience of our digital opportunities programme is we've got arts organisations ranging from those working at the cutting edge of digital technologies, to a very small number of organisations who have just about got a computer and almost know how to turn it on. The vast majority are firmly in the middle. And if we can start to encourage a greater sharing between organisations, then there is more chance that whatever we do will move the majority of organisations further towards the cutting edge.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY JULIAN ANDERSON

'It's not about building websites and databases and waiting for people to rock up and start using them. It is about making sure the content is out there'
Ross Parry

Participants

Kate Arnold-Forster, director, Museum of English Rural Life
Karen Brookfield, deputy director (strategy and business development) Heritage Lottery Fund
Gail Durbin, head of online museum, Victoria and Albert Museum
Rheinallt Ffoster-Jones, programme manager, People's Collection Wales
Adrian Friedli, director of digital projects, Arts Council England
Sue Howard, director, Yorkshire Film Archive
Ross Parry, academic director and senior lecturer, school of museum studies, University of Leicester
Jim Richardson, managing director, Sumo
Fiona Talbott, head of museums, libraries and archives, Heritage Lottery Fund

Kate Arnold-Forster: There is the trade-off between doing the kind of bread-and-butter stuff that you have to do to keep the show on the road, against doing something innovative which may or may not work. Maybe it is the wrong way to look at it, but I think most of us feel we've still got to keep cataloguing those objects and getting the basic records up.

RP: There is a long professional culture that says: "We are venues with physical objects and people come to see curated exhibits." It is there in our curricular, in Accreditation, in our professional ethics and in our professional language. So digital is still not a natural thing to do. Also there is a lack of proactive brokering.

Sue Howard: I think that the innovation should not necessarily all be on the creative or access side. There has to be an awful lot of joined-up thinking about how we use the technologies behind it all. If we can innovate so that we can get the standards to digitise that we want, that work across the sector, then that's fantastic. In terms of the production and the technologies, that's innovation. It won't be seen by our audience and that's great because it shouldn't be seen. If we could get some investment into that sort of innovation as well, then fantastic.

Rheinallt Ffoster-Jones: Good leadership allows for good ideas to come forward and to be actioned and implemented. We went through a number of fears with the People's Collection in Wales. What we tried to do is, instead of thinking of the hundred reasons why not to, we thought, "what could be done with it?". We couldn't call it the People's Collection without having people contribute, so we needed moderation. When we opened the digital gates of the People's Collection, we knew it could be inundated with all kinds of material. We invested a lot of time and money ▶

'With the People's Collection what we tried to do is, instead of thinking of the hundred reasons why not to, we thought what could be done with it'
Rheinallt Ffoster-Jones

'Is there an element of having to slow down and ask why you're doing it? Lots of practitioners seem to be saying: "I have to do this because my chief executive wants us to"'
Karen Brookfield

'Digital media allows collaboration and that can mean that you need very little money'
Jim Richardson

to develop a moderation system and the initial fears were that we were going to have thousands of pornographic images pouring through every day. We've had one swear word. We had to go through that process. It's ensuring that the end result is worth it and there is a mitigation of the risk.

Karen Brookfield: Digital innovation may mean very different things and innovation for one organisation is not necessarily innovation for another. We wanted people to think about whether we take risk or not. I am sure there are lessons from previous initiatives where we should look and think: "Did we weigh up the risks sufficiently? What can we learn?" If we can try and get that conversation going, it would be very helpful, rather than a feeling that either innovation isn't happening at all, or that it needs a lot of money.

JR: Digital media allows collaboration and that can mean that you need very little money. Some of the stuff that we've done on Twitter has brought together hundreds of museums from around the world to work together. It has brought attention to the sector from people who might have not been thinking about museums, and it takes no money. It takes an idea and then some people to spend a tiny amount of time each doing it and the effect is massive.

AF: It is difficult to conceive of a serious programme of innovation where you're not taking risks and, in the current climate, that's challenging. But if there is an approach right from the start that you take on those risks and, whether they succeed or fail, if the kind of learning that takes place is available and shared so that more than only the organisation involved is able to benefit from it, then everyone moves forward as a result of those risks. If organisations know that if they're going to try something new and challenging, that they can learn from what other organisations are doing, it means that everybody doesn't have to take a risk around every aspect of what they are exploring. This means the huge and unreasonable pressure on people to succeed at everything they take on is lessened.

MJ: Has there been any meaningful evaluation of previous projects?

RP: There are formal evaluations. There is the University of Edinburgh report on the national museums online learning project and there have been formal reports on Culture Online. Sitting next to those are the academic papers, and we just need to look through the last 13-years worth of online proceedings for the Museums and the Web conference and you will find hundreds of papers there, written by practitioners and academics, where they're reflecting on what we did and what we learned. Then there is the live con-

'As organisations, sometimes we need to stop and reflect, and there never seems to be the time to do that'
Sue Howard

versation on the Museums Computer Group, on the archive and museum informatics social networking site.

KB: Are there also lessons about getting something into the mainstream of the organisation? We've touched on leadership and why we're doing something in terms of a business objective, but is there an element of having to slow down and asking that question about why you're doing it? Lots of practitioners seem to be saying: "I feel I have to do this because my chief executive wants us to."

MJ: Who are we doing it for?

SH: There is no Facebook link on Yorkshire Film Archive online, there is no Twitter link, because we need to think about why, what is it that we're trying to do? How are we going to use it effectively and what is it that we're trying to say when we do? As organisations, sometimes we do just need to stop and reflect a little bit, and there never seems to be the time to do that these days and that's partly funding driven, but it is also, partly, needing to keep up with the massive change of pace in digital technologies.

But, of course, the other thing for a small organisation is that whatever our websites or our online offers are, there is also an assumption that we just put that little icon on and get our Facebook going. It takes time. There has to be somebody at the other end doing it and if we're not smart about how we communicate and have those conversations, then it very quickly dies and that's a fear for me that I probably need to get over or allocate resource to make sure that when we do it, we do it well and we embed it in part of our practice as an organisation.

KA-F: We've spent the last few years arguing for the investment for just upgrading our system and simply moving our digital records on to the right generation of system, and now we may have a little moment of opportunity where we can put our head above the parapet and start to engage in all of this. Nobody is offering you exciting rewards for doing that, or funding for doing that, and just about every local authority and museum in the country will also be having that battle.

GD: I sympathise with the issue of whether you have the resources to keep a Facebook conversation going. But I do think that with many of these digital things, the only way to find out about them is to do it and that unless you're prepared to sign up for Twitter, maybe just use it yourself or open your Facebook account, you cannot see the potential. It is not something you can do in theory. I would very strongly advocate that museums do not spend ages thinking about it, that they just do something ▶

'One of the barriers is fear and museums have to work very hard to shed that fear. They cannot control things once they become digital'
Gail Durbin

Apps and sites we like

TED: a non-profit organisation devoted to "ideas worth spreading". www.ted.com

Aurifi by Punk Pie: an iPhone game that includes challenges that combine sound with the iPhone's tilt movement sensors www.punk-pie.com

Guardian app: the newspaper app has had over 200,000 downloads since 2009. www.guardian.co.uk/iphone

Streetmuseum: a Museum of London iPhone app that guides users to over 200 sites across London where they can view archive images and information. itunes.apple.com/gb/app/museum-london-streetmuseum/id369684330?mt=8

Club Penguin: an online role-playing game for children developed by Disney. The website has 12 million users. www.clubpenguin.com

Museum with no frontier: the site aims to establish a trans-national museum that presents works of art, architecture and archaeology in the context in which they were created. www.museumwnf.org

Historypin: a site where people can come together to share their historical pictures and stories. www.historypin.com

Artfinder: access to hundreds of thousands of paintings from around the world. Users can create profiles, receive personalised recommendations and share and discuss art with friends via Facebook and Twitter. www.artfinder.com

Trove: a website focused on social science, literature and local and family history in Australia. Includes images, biographies, music, newspapers and books. trove.nla.gov.au/

small. Don't be over ambitious but just get in there and try it. Because once you have done that, you will have opinions and ideas.

RFJ: The approach taken by us is posing the question: "Who are you doing it for?" And what we realised is that it's everybody. Start with a business plan but then try to break it down. We used the ladder of participation, which breaks down the overall usage of the site. In web use, about 52% are inactive in the sense of not engaging much in the use of the web: right at the top you have the very actives who are blogging, tweeting, etc, and then you have got the in-betweens. We realised that a better approach for engaging our key audiences was for them to gain some skills. We use the data to assess how many people we progressed on the ladder of participation. The majority of people are mainly consuming: viewing it, reading it, enjoying it but we're seeing now how they go up the ladder and put up a comment for example. That's why we need to spend time on who we're doing it for, so we have the ability to make a more three dimensional audience structure.

RP: Every day I get to sit with a whole year's worth of bright postgraduates who are beginning their careers and they are naturally immersed in this world. In the ideas that our students are coming up with, in exhibition designs and practical projects, digital's embedded. It is not "other". They do not use the word innovation. There is just education. There is just marketing. There is just good collections management.

MJ: Do we know much about what our audiences want?

AF: Yes, there is research into public behaviours and what appetite might there be for better, greater, cultural provision. There is a pretty clear message saying that it could be better and it would be welcomed. Why would we think that the areas that we're interested in would be, somehow, completely separate from how people live the rest of their lives? It is not about the technology, it is about how people use the technology. Most people whose business and interest is in developing technology, rarely predict how it is going to be used. The technology is socially shaped by how it is then adopted. Ultimately, it goes back to the question of: what are organisations trying to do? They're trying to bring the content that they hold or the activity that they are passionate about to audiences. What technology increasingly is making possible is new and inspiring ways that that can be achieved.

Fiona Talbott: Are we saying we have the stuff there and they will come? As a funder, that's quite a difficult question for us because we can-

'We've spent the last few years arguing for the investment for upgrading our systems. Nobody is offering exciting rewards for that or funding for doing that'
Kate Arnold-Forster

'We have argued strongly with the organisations that we work with that if you're not present in the digital arena at all you will increasingly be invisible'
Adrian Friedli

'Are you saying we have the stuff there and they will come? As a funder that's quite a difficult question for us because we cannot fund everything'
Fiona Talbott

not fund everything. We have to have some sort of framework and we have limitations of money. It is not the way that you would do an exhibition, and then think what your target audience is. As a funder, we have to have some lines drawn somewhere. And so we would expect an organisation to say to us, well we're doing this project and we're digitising this material because we are reaching X, Y and Z.

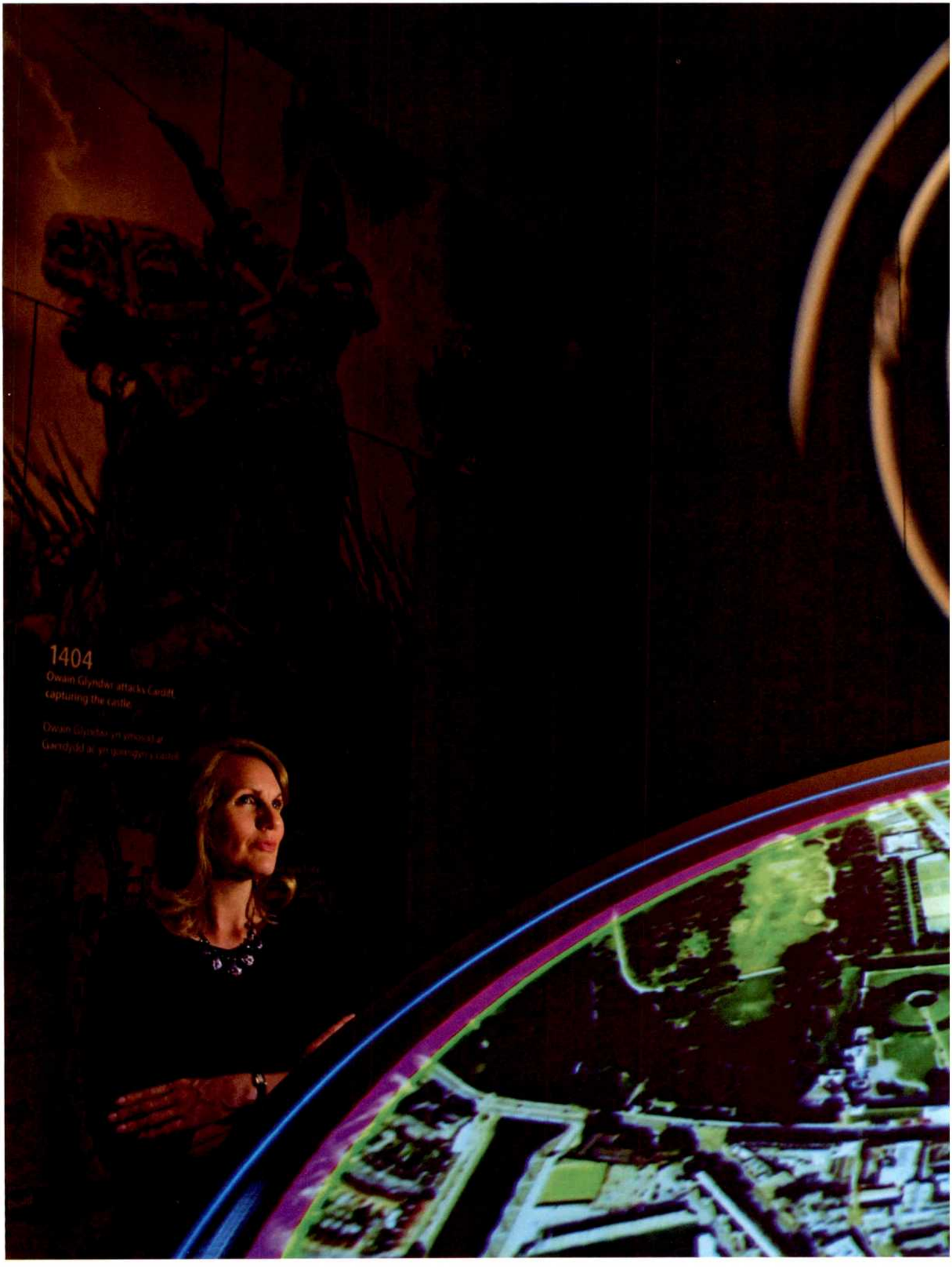
RP: There is a big shift that we're going through in a moment, which is that it is not about building museum websites and big databases and waiting for people to rock up and start using them. It is about making sure that content is out there and, some of our audiences may not notice or care whether it is museum content, it is just usable content that is there when they need it. That's what our model is becoming. So, it is not building huge monolithic museum web sites and waiting for people to come to them, but actually to go out to where people are on the web.

GD: "Getting it out there" in the digital world is not easy and it isn't what the average museum can cope with very well. I wouldn't spend too much time worrying about that. We have created our database of our one million objects, which is available for anybody to access and use, but that's the more advanced end of digital activity and my feeling is that for most museums signing up for Facebook or Twitter might just be the better end to start.

AF: The YouView project is very interested in how the arts sector could get all of its content into YouView because, of course, if you create a platform like YouView, what you desperately need is content. This goes all the way back to the digitisation question – arts organisations have content but do they have it in a form that, even if they wanted to, they could make available through this new platform, YouView? Probably not. The ways in which audiences reach organisations are many and various and what we've argued strongly with the organisations that we work with is that they need to address the fact that if you're not present in this digital arena at all you will increasingly be invisible. You will, as new generations come on stream, struggle to engage with the audiences.

To what extent you are visible and in what ways you engage with the web or with digital technologies can be many and various and can suit the scale of the organisation. But getting everyone, or the vast majority of people, plugged in is the first step.

This digital roundtable is part of the Heritage Lottery Fund's wider consultation into its future strategy. The deadline for responses is 26 April. www.hlf.org.uk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Owain Glyndŵr attacks Cardiff
capturing the castle

City challenge

Simon Stephens hears how Kate Howe has led the development of a museum that tells the story of Cardiff and its people Photographs by *Phil Sayer*

Kate Howe at a glance

Kate Howe has 15 years' experience in museums and has worked at Ironbridge Gorge Museum in Shropshire, Bantock House and Park, Wolverhampton, and Dudley's Black Country Living Museum.

She has a PhD in history, and an MA in heritage management.

Following university, Howe began her career working for a national healthcare company, where she spent seven years.

She was born in Newport.

When Kate Howe joined the project to give the people of Cardiff their very own city museum in August 2008 there was great enthusiasm, but no collection, very little funding and just a handful of staff.

Less than three years later, the Cardiff Story is open for business and welcoming its first visitors. The museum was unveiled on 1 April with an official opening planned for early June.

"They had the germ of an idea of what they wanted to do, but they did not really have a plan as to how they were going to fund it and bring it to reality," says Howe. "Cardiff Council had the ambition but they had no collection at all. So what we have achieved has been absolutely from scratch. It is great testament to the council's ambition but also to how well the team we have put together here have worked."

Howe joined with 15 years' experience working in a number of different museums but she also points to her time outside the sector as an important factor in helping her to make the Cardiff Story a reality. After taking her first degree, she wanted to do a master's in women's studies but a lack of funding meant she looked for full-time work and ended up at a national healthcare company.

"I did very well, and they paid me lots of money and gave me a big swanky car and before I knew it I was a director running a really big operation," says Howe. "I worked there ▶

for seven years and it gave me a fantastic formal training in business management, which is where I think I'm different from lots of other museum professionals. That background gave me a real business acumen and an entrepreneurial edge."

The money she earned allowed her to do a heritage management course at the Ironbridge Institute in Shropshire that led to work at the Ironbridge Gorge Museum on projects such as the restoration of Rosehill House and access provision at Blists Hill Victorian Town. From there she worked on the redevelopment of Bantock House Museum in Wolverhampton and then at Dudley's Black Country Living Museum.

Public consultation

Howe says each of these jobs gave her experience of fundraising and project management, which has helped greatly at Cardiff.

"If you have had to raise the money yourself you are incredibly careful about how you spend it as you know that if you go over budget you are the one who is going to have to find the money, so you will be up again until two in the morning doing another funding application."

But it is not just the management and fundraising side of museums that appeals to Howe, she is also passionate about history.

"I suppose I am a little bit different from a lot of people in the museum world, because I grew up on a council estate," says Howe. "Neither of my parents went to university but they were very creative people, and had this absolute enthusiasm and love of history."

This love of history was taken up by Howe, who has been very involved in making sure the content and tone of the interpretation in the displays are right at the Cardiff Story. Much of this has been done with museum officer Victoria Rogers, who has worked alongside Howe and exhibition designer Redman Design.

"Victoria and I have been very hands-on throughout the process," Howe says. "We had a very clear vision of what we wanted to achieve, very much based on what we had been asked to produce on behalf of the community."

Howe is keen to emphasise that public consultation has been central to the project and has led the museum's development at every turn. There have been various consultation panels representing areas such access, education, lifelong learning, older people and youth. These groups advised on the series of temporary exhibitions that the museum created to help develop the content and tone of the permanent displays.

'Every story is told from an individual point of view'

"Every story is told from an individual's point of view and there is no curatorial authorship of anything; we just helped to structure the story and make sense of it," says Howe.

As well as the advisory groups, the museum has worked closely with the South Wales Echo, and has used the newspaper to call for donations of objects.

"The Echo has raised our profile with communities that are not always the easiest to engage with and told them what objects we need," says Howe.

The consultation has been important but it has also been challenging, as catering for a wide range of access groups can be difficult, particularly when their needs conflict.

But public consultation is just one of the many challenges that Howe has had to overcome to make the Cardiff Story a reality. Putting together a team to carry out the project was one of the most important of these. Most of the staff are in their first museum job and partnerships have provided ways to access funding streams to increase staff numbers beyond the core team. One such post is the digital stories curator, Mari Lowe, whose work as been funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council in partnership with the University of Glamorgan.

Cardiff Story at a glance

When the Cardiff Story opened on 1 April in the Old Library building, Cardiff was no longer the only major UK city without a museum to conserve its heritage and celebrate its identity.

The first phase of the museum cost £2.4m and comprises a ground-floor gallery, new entrance and learning centre, education suite and the historic tiled corridor. The Heritage Lottery Fund gave £445,000 to phase one, while Cardiff Council provided £1.75m

Phase two will feature a first floor gallery, cafe and a temporary exhibition space.

The museum's core funding comes from Cardiff Council. Cardiff Story employs 12 staff.

National museum partnership

"She has gone out and worked with the valley communities, which are very important for us to engage with as they have a very different view about the city's heritage," says Howe. "She has made some terrific digital stories with individuals and communities that I don't think we would have been able to reach easily through any other route."

Having no collection in the beginning was obviously a major challenge, but shortly after joining the Cardiff Story Howe formed a partnership that allowed her to access an 8,000-strong collection that was owned by a museum in Cardiff that closed in the 1920s and has since been held in storage by National Museum Wales.

"It was a typical turn of the century city collection so, to be frank, we wouldn't want to display all of it and we have

Displays at the Cardiff Story, which opened on 1 April

no storage here," says Howe. "We have a fantastic partnership with the national museum because they allow us to have back the objects we want to display that are meaningful to the city now, but not have the stuffed animals and splayed insects that are not relevant to the city at all."

A range of audiences

The Cardiff Story also has the challenge of catering for a wide range of audiences, says Howe. There are those living in Cardiff, which is a pretty diverse city. Then there are tourists from the rest of Wales and elsewhere in the UK. And, as Cardiff is a capital city, the council is also keen for the museum to appeal to the international market.

But Howe says that despite its remit to appeal to tourists, the museum does not shy away from tackling the more controversial aspects of life in the area.

"We already have a tourist information centre at the front of the building and the museum is not intended to be an extension of that," says Howe. "Cardiff Council are being quite brave in allowing us to show the city's nightlife as well and to allow us to present some views from the valleys that would not always be complementary."

Fundraising has been a big challenge for Howe and she has used all her connections to get the best advice on raising the £2.4m needed for phase one of the project. She has been a council member of the Association of Independent Museums for some time and her mentors have included Diane Lees, the director-general of the Imperial War Museum, and Mark Taylor, the director of the Museums Association.

Howe says the Cardiff Story project really moved forward in December 2009, when a number of pieces fell into place. Firstly, it gained Accreditation and then a £445,000 grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund was confirmed. Shortly after, Howe secured a £256,000 donation from Henry Engelhardt, the chief executive of financial services firm Admiral, which has its headquarters in Cardiff.

Howe is now looking to fund the next phase of the Cardiff Story, which will require a further £1.6m, and she knows that private money will be vital now public cash is so scarce. "I think the current financial climate is very challenging. If you asked me to raise £2m five years ago for a capital city museum I would have thought no problem."

Howe is proud of what she has achieved in Cardiff so far and is keen to press on with phase two. She says she has developed a great affinity for the area's culture, despite being born in Newport.

"I am very much aware that I'm not a Cardiff city girl, so I very much value the input from people who are real Cardiffians," she says. "We have a lot of Cardiffians on our team and we listen to what they say."

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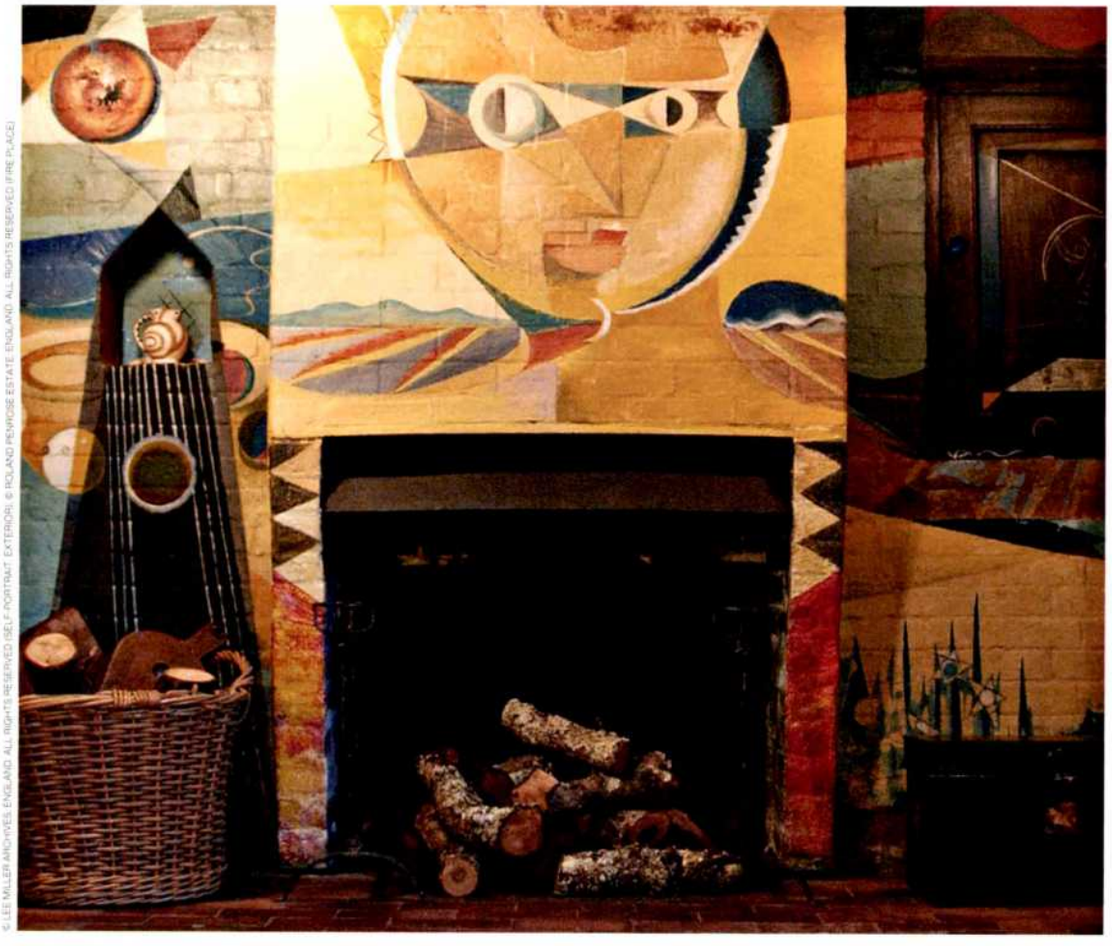
The Museum of... Our pick of the UK's specialist collections

Louise Gray on an East Sussex farmhouse that became a meeting place for some leading figures in modern art

Where Farley Farm House is in Chiddingly, East Sussex.
What It is the former residence of surrealist photographer and war correspondent Lee Miller and her artist/writer husband Roland Penrose. It is also the home of the Lee Miller Archives (LMA) and the Penrose Collection, says their granddaughter Ami Bouhassane, who is the registrar and archivist of the LMA and the curator of the Penrose Collection.
Opened The farm opened to pre-booked tours in 2000 and to drop-in visitors in 2008. It opens on the first and third Sundays from April to October.
Collection The Barn Gallery, a former farm storage area, has temporary exhibitions. Inside the farmhouse, there are works by Penrose, Miller and many of their artist friends who visited the house, including Man Ray, Pablo Picasso and Joan Miró. Some works have become part of the house itself, such as Penrose's painted fireplace and, above the Aga in the kitchen, a ceramic tile by Picasso. There are thousands of photographs and documents in the LMA, which was started by Miller's son (and Bouhassane's father) Antony Penrose. The Penrose Collection includes works by Picasso, Bridget Riley and Richard Hamilton.
Highlights "The mummified rat is very popular," says Bouhassane. "It was found by Roland under the floorboards in Lee's bedroom. He put it in his cabinet of curiosities next to a tile by Picasso. The rat has been loaned out twice on exhibition."
Help at hand Twelve core staff work at the farm, plus "one brave and true volunteer and several other amazing people" who guide visitors and act as gallery invigilators.
Budget There are four strands to the venue's business: income from visitors; reproduction rights sales; sales of Miller's photographs; and revenue from touring exhibitions.
Sticky moment "At the end of 2009 we discovered that the house was infested with death-watch beetles," says Bouhassane.

Above: Lee Miller's Self-Portrait. She was renowned as an artist and reportage photographer. Below: Farley Farm House's fireplace, as painted by Roland Penrose. Right: the timber-framed farmhouse recently hosted an infestation of death-watch beetles



"We had to empty the whole house of all its artworks, treat all the woodwork and get it back into place before opening in 2010. The very large attic hadn't been touched for 40 years. We found a suitcase of Man Ray's and some very odd fancy dress costumes."
Survival tip "Have a really close-knit team that are passionate and will do almost anything," says Bouhassane.
Visitors 2,500 in 2010.
Future plans "To create an online database of all the works in our ethnographic and folk art collection," says Bouhassane. The farmhouse has planning permission to redevelop its barn gallery.

www.farleyfarmhouse.co.uk

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Northern Spirit, Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne, p48

Reviews

'A live caterpillar was the first thing I noticed on entering the gallery... It looked quite at home crawling beneath Cycle of Nature by the Welsh painter Ceri Richards' *Stuart Burch* on the Impressionist and Modern Art Galleries, National Museum Cardiff

Impressionist and Modern Art Galleries, National Museum Cardiff, p46

Robert Burns Birthplace Museum, Ayrshire, p42

Robert Burns Birthplace Museum, Ayrshire

Humour, interactivity and enthusiastic guides impress *Lyndsey Mackay* at this museum dedicated to Scotland's most celebrated poet

The creators of the newly opened Robert Burns Birthplace Museum in Alloway faced the unenviable task of satisfying the expectations of stalwart fans of the poet, while encouraging new audiences and, crucially, new generations to take him into their hearts.

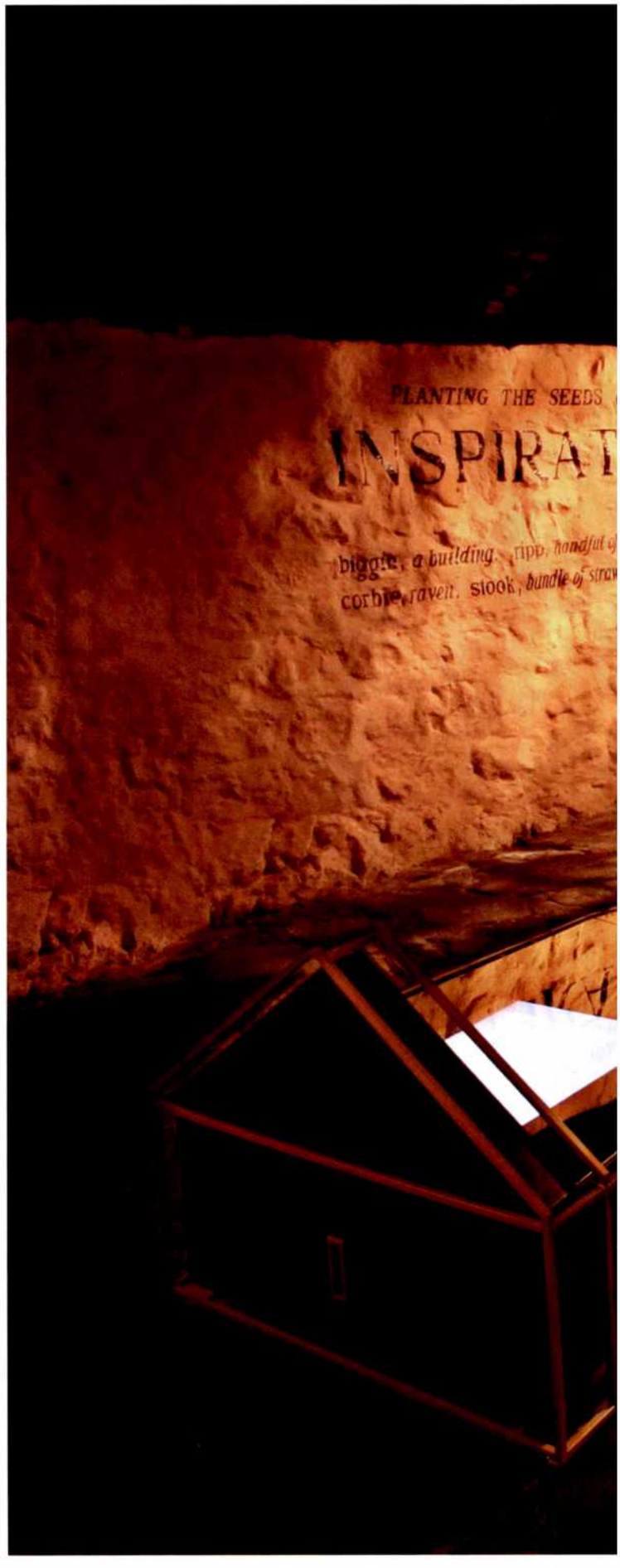
The first things visitors see are Burns's writing desk and chair, although when I visited, people queuing to get their picture taken with them obscured the items. The number of visitors who wanted a photo of the desk where Burns wrote his many poems and songs gave an indication of their deep connection to him.

Inside the museum, I was struck by the low-light level. This is necessary because of the many original manuscripts on display, but it is used to great advantage. Illustrations and shadows give the impression of the dark and superstitious Scotland that Burns inhabited and that provided the context for his work. Some of the white text on the glass display cases is too difficult to read and is a distraction when viewing the objects, but that could be very easily rectified by reproducing it inside the cases.

The main exhibition area in the museum is one room. The cases in the centre relate to the making of the man, his inspirations and his legacy. Around the edges of the gallery are displays dedicated to some of Burns's most familiar works, such as To a Mouse and Ae Fond Kiss.

Each case is self-contained and therefore there is no single way to navigate the exhibition. This makes for a more playful and instinctive way to explore the exhibits, an approach further encouraged by the various low- and high-tech interactives dotted throughout the displays.

Many of the labels are in Scots and the choice to use Burns's mother tongue enhances the exhibits and highlights the fact that this is still a living language. It was great to learn a few words and the museum's choice to use Scots is important when ▸



Right: low-level lighting in the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum provides an atmospheric setting for displays on Scotland's national poet. Left: the museum puts Burns into the social and political context of the times

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considering the celebration and preservation of intangible cultural heritage. Burns himself was a champion of intangible cultural heritage and we owe a great deal to him. He wrote hundreds of lyrics to the music of old Scots songs, without receiving any payment, to ensure their preservation.

There is plenty to impress even the most devoted of Rabbie's fans, with the museum connecting various sites in Alloway related to the poet. You can visit a monument and garden made in the poet's honour, the Auld Brig O'Doon and Alloway Auld Kirk, made famous in his poem Tam O'Shanter, and the cottage where he was born. The cottage will be a huge draw. The enthusiastic guides give a rounded impression of the man and the context that informed his work.

Exploring the sites provides a much richer understanding of Burns. Standing in the Auld Kirk graveyard, you can read Robert's epitaph on his father's headstone and look through the church window where his Tam O'Shanter watched witches dance. I could imagine some fantastic recitals of the poem there.

What charmed me most about the museum was the use of humour. It is clear that those who created it have a lot of admiration and affection for Burns, who they refer to as "the face that launched a thousand shortbread tins". The exhibition room is lively and bustling and lots of situations have been created to encourage interaction with other visitors.

Rather than tailor interactives to specific audiences, they appear to have been developed to fit the various levels of interaction that different people participate in. An interactive that involved designing shortbread tins proved popular with families as they could each contribute something.

There is one large table interactive that is specifically designed for social use but many others sparked conversations because of their novelty. At one of my favourites – a Burns jukebox that categorises his songs into familiar genres such as punk and power ballads – an elderly man started to explain to me how it worked. It may be that he took me to be hopeless with technology, but I think that the exhibit genuinely excited him.

Above: the museum's labels are in Scots in order to emphasise Burns's mother tongue and to make links to modern Scots writers. Below: the cottage in which Burns was born is part of the museum complex

It demonstrates something about the atmosphere of exploration and sharing that the curators have created in the museum. I have certainly never experienced a visitor talking me through their thoughts on a painting or a static display. But here, the way visitors are able to engage with the displays allows them to share with other visitors.

The curators and designers have created many ways for visitors to engage with the subject matter, including exploring the fantastic objects and sites, listening to Burns's songs and poems, using the interactives and learning from one of the guides.

But they have not stopped there. Robert Burns has an international following and so it is only right that the museum is far reaching when encouraging access to its collections.

The museum is developing its online collections and in the meantime has created an excellent piece of user-generated-content in the gallery. This exhibit links visitors to the venue with its online counterpart by inviting people to upload a video of their rendition of Auld Lang Syne. This is a great example of user-generated content and it works well because it is simple and each contribution enhances the exhibit for all.

The three videos I chose at random were all created by young males, the furthest afield from Sri Lanka. This provided only a quick snapshot of contributors, but as more people take part it will be interesting to see who they are and where they come from.

In a few minutes this exhibit spectacularly demonstrates the continued relevance and popularity of Burns. It is clear that whether he is an auld or new acquaintance, he will not be forgot.

Lyndsey Mackay is a curator at the Open Museum, Glasgow Museums

Project data

Cost £21m
Main funders Heritage Lottery Fund, Scottish Government, Scottish Enterprise Ayrshire, South Ayrshire Council
Exhibition design Event Communications
Architect Simpson & Brown
Interactives Spiral Productions
Main contractor Border Construction

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Impressionist and Modern Art Galleries, National Museum Cardiff

National Museum Cardiff's presentation of art has taken off with the opening of seven new galleries, says *Stuart Burch*

A live caterpillar was the first thing I noticed on entering National Museum Cardiff's newly refurbished Impressionist and Modern Art Galleries. The insect was a bizarre sight on a freezing cold winter's day, but it looked quite at home crawling beneath Cycle of Nature by the Welsh painter Ceri Richards.

Cycle of Nature hangs among a selection of surrealist works from the 1930s. This is one of the themes used to organise the displays. Works are arranged by artistic movement, period or nationality. British art is also divided according to genres such as portraits and landscapes.

This clear arrangement makes it easy to navigate the displays in the seven new galleries at the museum. It also makes conducting guided tours much simpler. This was something I learned from the museum's Eleri Wyn Evans, who was leading a primary school group around the galleries at the time of my visit.

Watching her captivated audience reminded me why art matters. The children were encouraged to let their imaginations loose. What does Richards' Cycle of Nature mean? Well, the children were told, you can decide, because we don't know all the answers.

© AMGUEDDFA CYMRU - NATIONAL MUSEUM WALES (ALL IMAGES)

Below: Rodin's Kiss is centre stage in National Museum Cardiff's revamped Impressionist and Modern Art Galleries.
Right and below right: Monet's Palazzo Dario and JMW Turner's The Storm are among the treasures of the Davies sisters' bequest

We also don't know all the questions. The rehang shows how the collection is being continually reinterpreted, although some themes are constant. One is the importance of key collectors, notably the Davies sisters, Gwendoline and Margaret. It is largely thanks to them that the museum has such a spectacular collection of British and European modern art.

A recess at the far end of the central gallery focuses on these unmarried granddaughters of one of Wales' richest industrialists. A selection of documents and artefacts charts their charity work, philanthropy and cultural activities. We learn that they founded the Gregynog Press in 1922 in order to "help cultivate a love of beautiful things in the people of Wales" – a sentiment that could be equally applied to the art collection that they so generously bequeathed to Wales and its national museum.

A timeline along the wall lists their principal acquisitions and the prices paid, starting in 1908 when Turner's The Storm was bought for £5,775. It ends with Brown Harbour by Terry Frost, which was acquired for £250.

It is unusual to see price tags in an art museum, even if the estimated value of the paintings today is not given. Maybe there is a risk that their immense financial worth might attract avaricious attention given the rise of financially motivated disposal in public museums.

But the reason why our museum collections should not be cherry-picked in this way is apparent in the rotunda next door. This is built around Flowers, Lily Pad, Pictures and Labels, a large-scale mosaic by Patrick Caulfield, commissioned and paid for by the Derek Williams Trust. Caulfield was inspired by the three paintings of waterlilies by Monet that Gwendoline Davies donated to the museum. This indicates how the Davies sisters' bequest has generated more "beautiful things". Wales's national art collection may have come together in a piecemeal fashion, but it is very much an organic whole that is so much more than simply the sum of its parts.

Sculptures by the Welsh artist William Goscombe John encircle Caulfield's mosaic. Works by other sculptors are dotted around the galleries. They look magnificent alongside the paintings. The best combination is Monet's San Giorgio Maggiore by Twilight, hanging between two bronze sculptures by Degas. This grouping features in a gallery devoted to French impressionists. The vivid blue walls set Monet's orange sunset ablaze.

The colour scheme for this room is established by the stunning blue dress of Renoir's La Parisienne. Bought by Gwendoline Davies for £5,000, it rightly takes pride of place at the centre of the main wall. She stares across at Augustus John's full-length portrait of his wife Dorelia McNeill in the Garden at Alderney Manor hanging on the far wall of another gallery.

The curators use this imaginative arrangement to demonstrate the dialogue between French and British art without resorting to lengthy explanations. Instead, the art is displayed as an "aesthetic hang", with text panels kept to a minimum.

There is a touchscreen tucked away in the corner of the gallery devoted to British art around 1900. This compares two iconic artists: Gwen John and her brother Augustus. Differences in technique, material and subject matter are explained next to clusters of works by the siblings.

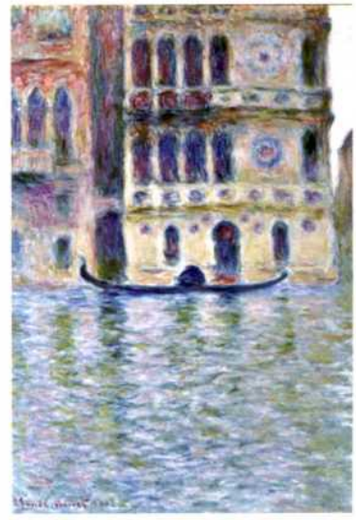
Complementing the permanent hang is a temporary exhibition gallery that showcases individual Welsh artists. This will play an important role in bolstering the Welshness of the display. The balance between Welsh and non-Welsh artists has been a bone of contention right from the inception of the museum and this comes across very clearly in Rhiannon Mason's informative book, Museums, Nations, Identities: Wales and its National Museums.

National Museum Cardiff's refurbished Impressionist and Modern Art Galleries bring its wonderful collection to life. It will appeal to art connoisseurs and children. With the latter in mind, it would be good to see more resources for younger visitors. Hopefully it will soon have its own activity book similar to that for the "historical" art collection in the adjacent galleries.

The collection's potential is destined to increase once the museum's contemporary art galleries reopen in the summer. This will come one year after the inauguration of the excellent Clore Discovery Centre on the ground floor. Such initiatives will help make sure that young people remain lifelong visitors to the museum.

Even though that caterpillar I spotted on my arrival was carefully rescued by a gallery invigilator, I very much doubt whether it survived Cardiff's bitterly cold winter to metamorphose into a beautiful butterfly. I am pleased to report that the vibrant, colourful National Museum Cardiff is, on the other hand, maturing nicely.

Stuart Burch is a lecturer in museum studies at Nottingham Trent University



Project data

Cost £100,000
Main funders Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales, Wolfson Foundation, Henry Moore Foundation
Lighting in house
CDM consultancy Davies Langdon
Graphics Ten4 Design
Refurbishment Rok
Vinyls Easycolourpint
Plinths D4 kt

Northern Spirit, Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne

An exhibition that celebrates the history of artistic achievement in north-east England is encouraging visitors to think and make connections, writes *Peter Lewis*

Above: Henry Perlee Parker's Pitmen Playing Quoits. Below: a printing block of an eider duck by Thomas Bewick. Right: a view of the Laing's Northern Spirit show. Below right: the Margaret and Winneford Bowl, a William Beilby glasswork. Newcastle once led the world in glass production

The ever-energetic Laing Art Gallery has unveiled a permanent exhibition that celebrates and records art and artefacts created by makers, manufacturers and artists from north-east England.

Northern Spirit is the result of the gallery sifting through its considerable collections, which is not as easy as it might first appear. Most regional institutions have stacks of stodgy local stuff in their stores; portraits of politicians and patricians, plus interminable views of places, more usually measured by acreage or tonnage than by quality. The task of curators is to identify the significant and to find ways of stimulating public interest; in short, as the test papers say, to contrast and compare.

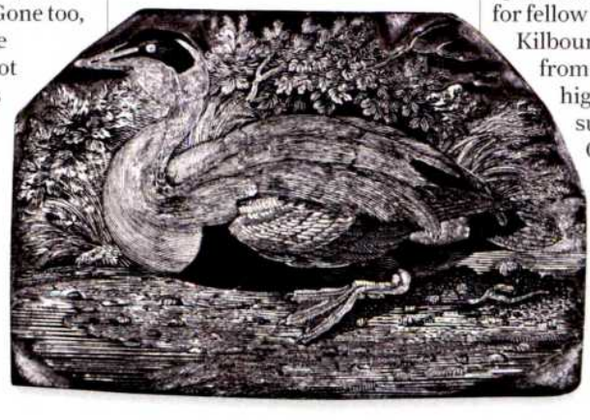
The Laing has some local star exhibits, large apocalyptic paintings by John Martin, wood block engravings by Thomas Bewick, glass and ceramics from Beilby, Sowerby and Maling, plus superb Newcastle silver. These have been integrated with unfamiliar pieces and shown in a redesigned area at the front of the museum. What was once a series of small rooms is now one glass walled space, a see-through cabinet of curiosities.

Janus-like, the new exhibition has two faces. One entrance leads directly from the shop, the other via the cafe. There are three designated areas labelled Artists and Communities, Artists' Stories, and River and City, though these are somewhat arbitrary divisions.

Newcastle upon Tyne was once the largest glass-producing centre in the world. The exhibition shows exquisite Beilby enamelled glass as well as more commercial examples from Sowerby, Davidson and others. Maling made ceramics for 200 years on Tyneside, specialising in highly fashionable decorative wares and in commercial pottery for Ringtons tea and Keiller's marmalade. The area's 40-plus glassworks are all gone. Gone too, within living memory, are Maling and others. It is not only the heavy industries of mining, fishing and shipbuilding that have been blighted in the north east.

For the past 200 years artists have been drawn to record the lives of all these labouring industries, often romantically, rarely realistically. The Laing has many genre paintings by Ralph Hedley, who, from the late 19th century, specialised in paintings of northern folk. Skilful, but excessively sentimental and undemanding, these are popular designs for greetings cards and subjects for jigsaw puzzles.

Hedley's representations of miners are particularly sickly, exemplified by Geordie Ha'ad the Bairn. Intelligently, the curators have hung these adjacent to the more graphic Pit Road of 1960 by the brilliant Norman Cornish, himself an ex-miner, and near the starkly authentic 10am by Harry Wilson, one of a group of painters from Ashington, a colliery in Northumberland. It is a pity that space could not have been found for fellow "pitman painter" Oliver Kilbourn, whose End of Shift from 1941 would have highlighted the superficiality of Hedley's Going Home.



There is much for the social historian to study. Thomas William Pattison's huge oil 1954 painting On the Tyne shows the building of the tanker La Hacienda in the Wallsend yards

of the shipbuilder Swan Hunter. It dominates one entrance of the exhibition.

At the further end of the show are a series of pictures made by artists based at Cullercoats from the late 1880s. Arthur Hardwick Marsh's Ploughman Homeward Plods His Weary Way is fiercely poetic and Gustave Courbet-like. Robert Jobling was inspired by a Longfellow poem to illustrate homeward-bound fishwives against the setting sun in his 1886 painting Darkness Falls From The Wings of Night. Jobling's wife, Isa Thompson, shows women collecting seaweed and driftwood for fuel in her 1893 painting Fisherfolk.

More ostentatiously, John Charlton's epic The Women depicts a lifeboat being hauled across land for three miles by two lines of muscular women battling a snowstorm. One can almost hear the Wagnerian mood music. Charlton was determined to preach the nobility of the working masses, even though the records of the time might record that the boat was hauled by horses rather than teams of Grace Darling look-alikes.

The curators have also sought to find more modern artistic links with the north east. One wall shows, among other pieces, a fine Linear Motif by Victor Pasmore, a Marcel Duchamp-inspired assemblage by Lloyd Gibson and an intriguing transgender work by Lizzie Rowe.

Excellent though these are, their creators were passers-through rather than closely integrated members of the community. One more persistent visitor is almost overlooked. Around a corner, half hidden by a stack of cafeteria chairs, is LS Lowry's spiky evocation of a chapel near City Road in inner Newcastle in 1965. It alone is worth a visit to the exhibition.

Another delight, unexpected this time, is the impressive woodcarving by the 19th-century craftsman Gerrard Robinson, the archetypal local boy made good. He trained at the Newcastle School of Design, established a successful business in London, then returned to become a Freeman of the City. His huge three-dimensional overmantel depiction King Alfred in the Herdsman's Hunt is fascinating. "Some fireplace that," exclaimed one visitor. "Not if you have to dust it," was the riposte.

Project data

Cost £1.5m (TWAM budget, £1.05m)
Main funders Heritage Lottery Fund £250,000, Department for Culture, Media and Sport/Wolfson Foundation £100,000, Arts and Humanities Research Council £112, 935 (awarded through Newcastle University's International Centre for Cultural and Heritage Studies)
Curator Julie Milne
Display cases Click Netherfield

But what of the star players, Bewick and Martin? The displays of Bewick's woodblocks and illustrations are handled with a combination of tact and wonderment. This is in marked contrast to the treatment of Martin. We were promised, in advance publicity material, "a dramatic new hanging" of his canvas The Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. The result is an aberration. The picture is hung in a darkened bus-shelter construction and bombarded with red flashing lights and B-movie sound effects. Martin's canvases have their own in-built theatricality. They need space around them, not this imposed vulgarity.

Overall, the Northern Spirit gallery is a major achievement and astonishingly good value for expenditure of only just over £1.5m.

What enlivens and extends the displays is an interactive programme devised with the International Centre for Cultural and Heritage Studies at Newcastle University. This explores the relationships between artworks, place and people via computers and an interactive map of photographs from private individuals and the archives of Beamish and Newcastle City Library. The information is easy to find, non-patronising, and – wonder of wonders – was fully functional on all the three visits I paid to the Laing.

My New York-based, Newcastle-born son was moved and impressed by the scale and tone of the interpretation of his birthplace and would have stayed all day in the exhibition. Indeed, I had already noticed the very thorough and interested way in which everybody moved through the exhibition. To persuade visitors to slow down, think and seek connections is a major achievement.

Peter Lewis is a writer and a past director of Beamish, the North of England Open Air Museum

Books

A Museum of One's Own

Or how a new breed of financially confident Americans sought artistic immortality. By *Timothy Mason*

For about 30 years either side of 1900, the heavens were in alignment for a small group of people whom Anne Higonnet describes as "extreme collectors". Veritable tidal waves of money, often from across the Atlantic, swept temptingly through European private art collections. Advisers such as the scholarly Bernard Berenson and dealers such as the legendary Joseph Duveen scoured Europe for works that met the tastes and ambitions of their wealthy clients.

Money, it seemed, was no object – on a single day in 1916 Henry Frick ran up a bill for $5.2m, well over $125m in today's money. When Henry Huntington bought Gainsborough's Blue Boy from the Duke of Westminster in 1921, England was outraged at this act of cultural piracy. Even the director of the Berlin Museum, Wilhelm von Bode, described the painting's loss to America as part of "the greatest transplantation of art works the world has known since the Roman plundering of Grecian art and the rape of the churches and museums of Europe whereby Napoleon enriched the Louvre".

This was, of course, not solely a transatlantic struggle. Private collecting has never been solely a story of American money. Nevertheless, it was the battle between an old self-satisfied Europe and a brash new America that seemed to capture imaginations on both sides of the Atlantic. Perhaps it was the Americans' smugness – "We have not only become the leaders in finance and industry, but... we are taking possession of the world of art." Perhaps it was the American pirates' predilection for those icons of British art – Lawrence, Gainsborough, Raeburn, Reynolds and Romney; perhaps their ability to rub salt in the wound: Huntington hung the Blue Boy and Lawrence's Pinkie in the same room at his gallery in California. Or, worse still, to cock a snook at English self-importance – Cole Porter even wrote a song about the Blue Boy's immigration.

In her wide-ranging study of this era of collecting, Higonnet turns her spotlight's sharpest beam on the American collectors Frick, Gardner, Huntington and Bliss. Her first eight pages are taken up by a series of striking

black-and-white photographs of the principal characters. They are a serious group: having a great deal of money and spending it on the world's masterpieces doesn't look like much fun. Indeed, only Mildred and Robert Bliss, the creators of Dumbarton Oaks, the home for their collection of Byzantine and pre-Colombian art, look anything like content, sitting before a roaring fire and living up to their surname.

A Museum of One's Own is an elegant book, superbly illustrated and taking full advantage of the generous page size to appreciate just what a rich haul of treasures were gleaned in those well-financed raids and to see the galleries in which this cultural booty was elegantly displayed. At the same time, in the huge pages of text, Higonnet leaves few stones unturned. Facts and figures, character sketches, events from a very broad sweep of history tumble over one another so that it often seems that A Museum of One's Own contains two or three other books bursting to get out.

There are some tantalisingly brief glimpses of the collectors – the complex early private life of Arabella Huntington; the almost iconic status of Isabella Stewart Gardner; and Frick's belief that beauty could ease "the infamy and grief" that had haunted his early public and private life.

Frustratingly, Higonnet, who is professor of art history at Barnard College, New York, offers no convincing explanation of the forces that drive extreme collectors. She suggests that one possible motive for collecting art was that its "timeless beauty promises immortality by association". This argument may work with Fragonard and Rembrandt, but it is less satisfactory when explaining the motives of those who collect objects that have only limited intrinsic beauty.

There is always the possibility that they just liked art – or, from across the Atlantic, enjoyed poking Europe in the eye with a sharp and rather expensive stick.

By Anne Higonnet, Periscope Publishing, £30, ISBN 978-1-934772-92-8

Timothy Mason is a museum consultant

On my bookshelf

Jennifer Melville

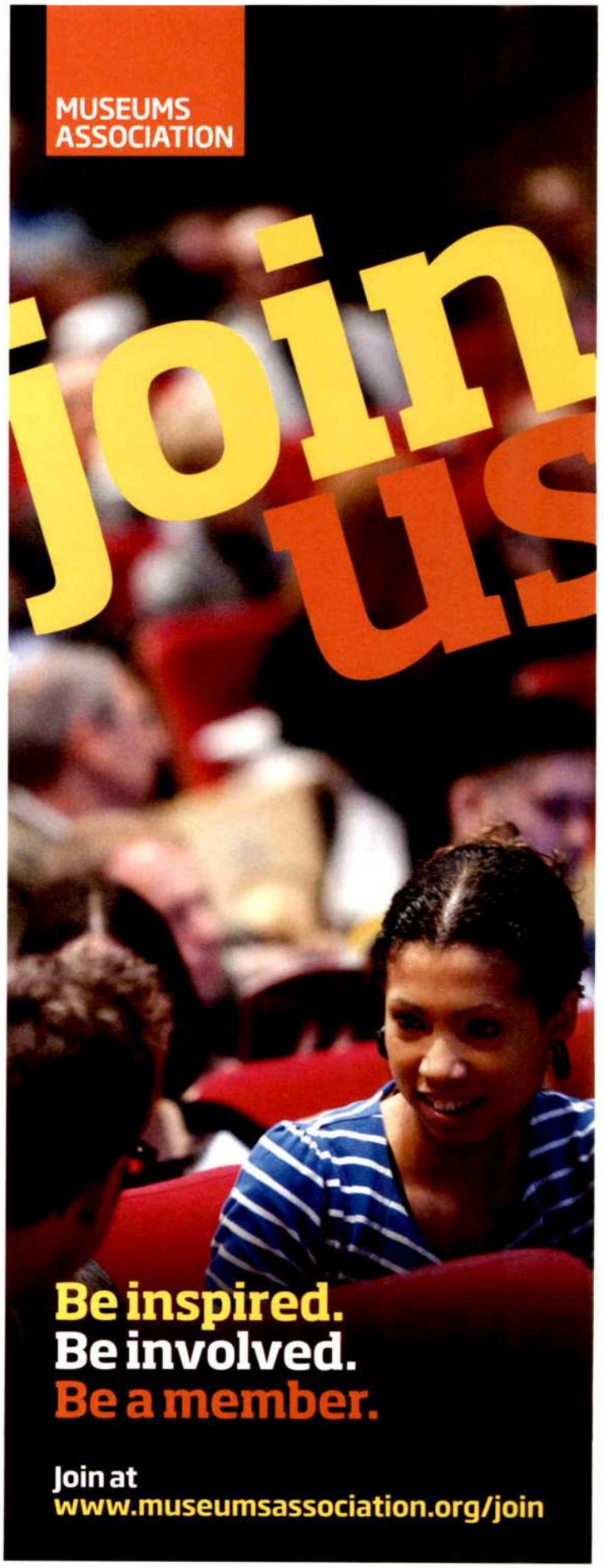
Artists on the Edge, by Brian Dudley Barrett

Artists on the Edge: The Rise of Coastal Artists' Colonies 1880-1920 is a fascinating survey of realist art from the countries on the fringes of the North Sea. It covers themes such as the geopolitics of pleinairism, the influence of Barbizon artists on later realist painters, the impact of the art market, new technology and improved communications and the ties formed through shared dealers, ateliers and even hotels. The author also hones in on numerous individual artists and their work and includes such fascinating phenomena as Mesdag's panorama of Scheveningen in the Hague.

The book has been especially apposite for me as it has coincided with two excellent shows to which Aberdeen Art Gallery has lent work, both of which tackle the subject of late 19th-century realist painting.

The first, Dutch Utopia: American Artists in Holland, 1880-1914, was organised by the Telfair Museums in Savannah, Georgia, in association with the Singer Laren Museum in the Netherlands. The second, Illusions of Reality: Naturalist Painting, Photography and Cinema 1875–1918, has just ended its run at the Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam, and is now showing at the Ateneum Art Museum, Finnish National Gallery of Art in Helsinki (until 15 May). Paintings from both exhibitions are included in Barrett's discourse; his highly detailed and discursive book has greatly enhanced my understanding of the themes of both exhibitions.

Jennifer Melville is the lead curator (art) at Aberdeen Art Gallery



Profile Neville Mutton: technical manager

Neville Mutton is gallery and technical manager at the Turner Contemporary, which opens in Margate this month. He has previously held logistical roles at Momart and the Hayward Gallery in London and Tate Liverpool.

At what stage did you join the Turner construction project?
I arrived last autumn and I have been very fortunate in having contractors around finishing off their work. It's very helpful to talk to a site manager who has seen the building rise from scratch. He can tell you exactly what's under the floors or behind the walls, which gives you more reassurance than simply looking at a plan.

What are the challenges of a brand new building?
I've been learning as we go along. We are, for example, using a new material on the wall. I was little concerned about it at first but it's effectively a dry-lining board that has great fireproofing and sound insulation properties. On top of that, the architect has designed the lighting himself; really beautiful spotlights. Similarly, the artists have been very responsive to the broad new parameters within which they have to work. They like the space, the fantastic views out to sea and the place it occupies in a part of England that hasn't had a great deal in terms of cultural venues.

How has the Turner Contemporary been received by local folk?
We have used a lot of local tradespeople and it's obviously very different work from what some of them have ever done. We're having special openings for the local contractors and craftspeople, which is a lovely reward for their efforts. It's fair to say some of them haven't been regular gallery visitors before but they've risen to some extraordinary challenges. There has been, of course, a Turner presence in one guise or another in the town for ten years. A lot of local people remember with great affection exhibitions that were held in an old branch of Marks & Spencer in the high street. There have been one or two critical comments, but most people are generally positive about the effect it will have on the town.

Local opinion on Turner Contemporary is positive, says Neville Mutton

Have you done seasidey things since arriving in on the Kent coast? Fish and chips in newspaper? Paddling?
Since we moved here, we got ourselves a dog, which the family enjoys walking on the beach. We also had a picnic on the sand one day last November; you get some fantastic days due to the vagaries of the micro-climate. I went to university in Canterbury, but rarely made it down to the Thanet coast so it's been nice exploring. Some of the towns can, at first sight, seem to be a bit daunting and a bit down on their luck, but there are some delightful hidden corners to explore.

Moves

Verity Slater starts this month at Modern Art Oxford in a new position as director, strategy and development.

Graham Sheffield has been appointed as the British Council's new director, arts. He was chief executive of the West Kowloon Cultural District, Hong Kong.

Heritage consultant **Sam Hunt** has become the executive director of the Association of Independent Museums. He is a former chief executive of the South West Museums, Libraries and Archives Council.

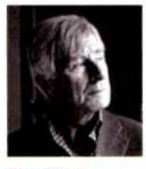
The National Army Museum, London, has appointed **Robert Hughes** as development fundraising manager; he was previously director of fundraising and marketing at the Mission to Seafarers, London; and **Neil Couzens** as commercial development manager, who joins from Chelsea Physic Garden, London, where he was marketing and special projects manager.

In Edinburgh, **Stephen Lloyd** has left his position as senior curator at the Scottish National Portrait Gallery to join auctioneer Bonhams as senior director of pictures.

Kevin Morgan is the new chairman at the Hitchin British Schools Trust, which runs the British Schools Museum, Hitchin.

Margaret Weston has become a patron of the Heritage Railway Association after stepping down from its presidency. **Richard Faulkner**, a Labour politician, succeeds her.

Verity Slater



Sam Hunt

Artist **Tomma Abts** and journalist **Lionel Barber** have been appointed as Tate trustees for a four-year period.

Artist **Dexter Dalwood**, and **Lance Batchelor**, chief executive of Tesco Telecoms, have been appointed as trustees to the National Gallery, London.

Christopher Rodrigues will serve a second four-year term as chairman of VisitBritain.

Trustee reappointments: Hampshire County Council's director of culture, **Yinnon Ezra**, and consultant **Alison McLean** at the National Heritage Memorial Fund, London; **Miles Irving** at the Imperial War Museum, London; and **Iain Watt** to the board of trustees of National Museums Scotland.

Who got the job?

General manager, Fusilier Museum, Bury, Lancashire.
Salary range £28,000 - £30,000
Advertised: MJ, April 2010

Helen Field
What attracted you to the job? The museum had just received over £4.1m of funding, been refurbished and moved to Bury town centre in June 2009.
Most memorable experience in the job? Champagne and Chivalry, the launch event in November for our conference facilities. We had soldiers in uniform serving canapés and champagne. The evening finished with a display from the regiment's corps of drums. It showed what military museums can achieve.
Other jobs operations director, Magna Science Adventure Centre, Rotherham; visitor services team leader, Eureka, the Museum for Children, Halifax.

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An Chomhairle Oidhreachta
The Heritage Council

Assessors, Training and Participant Advisor Panellists
The Museum Standards Programme for Ireland

The Heritage Council of Ireland promotes a standards programme for the museum sector within the Republic of Ireland. To complement its existing panels of assessors and trainers the Council is seeking to update and add to the expertise of these panels to support the delivery of the programme. The Heritage Council is also seeking to appoint a new panel of Participant Advisors. Panellists will be required to be available to work in Ireland on an assignment basis. Successful applicants, from across a range of disciplines, will be expected to display knowledge and experience of best practice in museum culture and/or conservation practice internationally. Preference will be given to those with considerable experience across a range of museum operations and to those capable of understanding the needs, and potential, of small-scale museum operations. Assessor Panel members should be available to attend an initial briefing meeting in Dublin, on 1 June 2011.

Closing date for applications: 5pm Thursday 21 April 2011

For further information and an application form please go to *www.etenders.gov.ie*

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MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

Museums Association National/Regional Representatives

To tie in with its new governance system and business plan, the Museums Association (MA) is seeking to appoint a representative for each of the devolved nations and English regions to serve for a period of 3 years.

Representatives will be individual members of the MA and the post will be voluntary. They will act as a key link between the MA and its members in their nation/region and will attend meetings on behalf of the MA.

Applications are invited from dynamic members wishing to represent their nation or region and offer more to their association.

The closing date for applications is Friday 15th April 2011. A shortlist will be drawn up and candidates will be contacted and interviewed over the telephone.

Nations:
Northern Ireland
Scotland
Wales

Regions in England:
East
East Midlands
London
North East
North West
South East
South West
West Midlands
Yorkshire

For more details go to: ***www.museumsassociation.org/represent***

On offer: the Royal Air Force Museum, London, wishes to dispose of a large number of instruments, models, ejection seats and photographic equipment

A zodiac settle by Gothic Revivalist artist William Burges is now at the Cecil Higgins Art Gallery & Bedford Museum

Goodbye on the Mersey, a painting by James Tissot, has been bought by the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, with Art Fund help

On offer

When disposing, give priority to transferring, preferably by gift, to accredited museums. Any proposed sales to other museums listed here have been judged to be compatible with the Museums Association's (MA) code of ethics. For further advice, see the MA's ethical guidelines (*www.museumsassociation.org*) or contact the MA's ethics department (020 7426 6953). More details about some of the items on offer below can be found on the MA's Find an Object listing service, *www.museumsassociation.org/collections/find-an-object*. Find an Object allows you to post adverts for disposals or loans throughout the month. All objects for sale on the Find an Object site must comply with Section 6 of the MA's code of ethics. Disposal toolkit guidelines can be found at *www.museumsassociation.org/collections/disposal*

● Hampshire County Council Museums Service offers the following objects to interested museums: a Tasker **threshing machine** (1891) with 54-inch drum; and a Wallis Titt four-wheeled extending farm elevator. Further details on request.
Contact: Oonagh Palmer
tel: 01962 826700
email: oonagh.palmer@hants.gov.uk

● Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum wishes to dispose of approximately 30 Concord Torus 100FX Halogen lights (plus 20 non-functioning lights with working parts). Details available on request. Items must be collected.
Contact: Chloe Johnson
tel: 01926 742702
email: chloe.johnson@warwickdc.gov.uk

● The Old Kiln Museum Trust, Surrey, offers a large number of duplicate **plumbing items** plus two incubators and an electrical generation charging panel free for collection to registered museums. Full list on request.
Contact: Chris Shepheard
tel: 01252 795571
email: info@rural-life.org.uk

● Redcar-based business Croda offers a **Bruynzeel** storage system free to a good home. The system must be collected or its delivery arranged by the recipient.
Contact: Tracey Turner
tel: 01405 864693
email: Tracey.Turner@croda.com

● The Royal Air Force Museum, London, wishes to dispose of a large number of instruments, models, **ejection seats** and photographic equipment. Offer open to 1 May.
Contact: Ian Alder
email: ian.alder@rafmuseum.org

● Southampton City Council's Arts and Heritage department offers a number of duplicate prints by the Halifax-born lithographer, sculptor and illustrator **Vernon Hill** to other accredited museums or galleries. Hill was associated with the golden age of illustration, the Art Nouveau Gothic movement and the sculptor Eric Gill.
Contact: Tim Craven
tel: 023 8083 2203
email: tim.craven@southampton.gov.uk

Wanted

● The Royal Aero Club Trust, London, is trying to find the **Royal Aero Club** minute books for the period September 1956 to June 1969. All information gratefully received.
Contact: Frederick Marsh
tel: 020 7736 3309
email: marshfromlondon@btinternet.com

Acquisitions

● The Cecil Higgins Art Gallery & Bedford Museum has bought a unique zodiac settle designed by a leading figure of the 19th-century Gothic Revival movement, William Burges. Subject to a temporary export bar, this experimental piece

of furniture was acquired thanks to a £480,000 grant from the National Heritage Memorial Fund, £190,000 from the Trustees of the Cecil Higgins Art Gallery and £180,000 from the Art Fund. Previously owned by two prominent literary figures, **Evelyn Waugh** and **John Betjeman**, the settle will form the centre piece of the art gallery and museum's new William Burges Gallery, due to open to the public late in 2012.

● The Bletchley Park Trust, near Milton Keynes, has acquired the Turing Collection, a rare collection of offprints relating to the life and work of mathematician and code-breaker **Alan Turing**. It has been saved for the nation following a £213,437 intervention by the National Heritage Memorial Fund, the final piece of funding required.

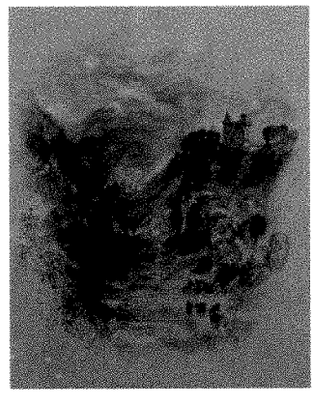
● Leamington Spa Art Gallery & Museum has acquired an artwork by one of Britain's leading artist-potters, **Edmund de Waal**. The acquisition of his water-shed was made possible with the help of the Friends of Leamington Spa Art Gallery and a MLA/V&A Purchase Grant.

● The Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, has bought a watercolour depicting 19th-century emigration by the French artist James Tissot with help from the Art Fund.

The Great North Museum is on the shortlist for the 2011 European Museum of the Year Award

Goodbye on the Mersey is an observation of a family saying goodbye to relatives heading off to the US by sea. The painting was bought at auction for £58,850; the Art Fund provided the full amount.

● Two postcard-sized paintings by JMW Turner, painted during his visit to Sir Walter Scott's **Abbotsford** home in the Scottish Borders in 1831, will be donated later this year to the Abbotsford Trust through the Art Fund. The watercolours, one showing Abbotsford and the other depicting Newark Tower in Yarrow in the Borders, will go on permanent display at Abbotsford following the completion of the historic home's refurbishment in 2013. Work is to commence later this year on a multi-million redevelopment of the attraction, including the construction of a new visitor centre and a major repair and refurbishment of the house itself. The trust has raised £10m to date to pay for the work and is continuing its efforts to raise a further £3m to ensure that the future of the property is secure.



JMW Turner's miniature painting of Newark Tower, Yarrow, is to be donated to the Abbotsford Trust

● Working in partnership with the Arnolfini arts centre, the Bristol Museum and Art Gallery has acquired five new works through the Art Fund International scheme to encourage UK museums to buy international art. Four works by **Walid Raad/The Atlas Group** were jointly acquired with Gallery of Modern Art, Glasgow, and Haegue Yang's Holiday for Tomorrow installation.

Funding

● A charity auction held at Christie's, South Kensington, on 17 February raised over £325,000 for the **Photographers' Gallery**, London. The sum will help fund the redevelopment of its central London gallery. Works by Helmut Newton, Tracey Emin, Mario Testino and Sebastião Salgado were among the 70 lots.

● The Herschel Museum of Astronomy, Bath, has been awarded £8,100 by the Your Heritage scheme for an exhibition and year-long programme of events and learning activities to mark the bicentenary of the appearance of the **Great Comet** of 1811.

● Museums Galleries Scotland has awarded grants of almost £450,000 to Recognised Collections of National Significance in 12 Scottish museums. The beneficiaries are the **Almond Valley Heritage Trust**, West Lothian; the **Auchindrain Trust**, Inveraray; **National Robert Burns Collection Partnership**, Edinburgh; **Dundee City Council**'s Recognised Collection; **Dundee Heritage Trust**; the **Pier Arts Centre**, Orkney; **Renfrewshire Council**, to create a new gallery space in Paisley Museum; the **Scottish Maritime Museum Trust**, Glasgow; the **Scottish Mining Museum Trust**, Edinburgh; the **Scottish Railway Preservation Society**, Bo'Ness; the University of Aberdeen's **Herbarium and Zoology Museum**; and the **University of Edinburgh**, to improve the way in which it manages details about its collection of historical musical instruments.

MA events calendar

MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

The MA regularly organises events, conferences and seminars. For further information, see www.museumsassociation.org/events or contact: Lorraine O'Leary 02074266940 lorraine@museumsassociation.org

Getting the most out of the AMA
11 May 2011, London
A workshop for anyone undertaking or thinking about undertaking the Associate of the Museums Association (AMA). The morning looks at the AMA's knowledge journal, how to find a mentor and how to write a CPD plan. In the afternoon we will explore the updated AMA criteria, the work-based project and the professional review. Participants are welcome to come for the entire day or just the afternoon.

Mentor refresher
6 July 2011, South East
A workshop for existing mentors of the AMA to receive an update on any developments in the scheme. Come along to catch up with the professional development department, refresh your mentoring skills and share information with other mentors.

Introduction to mentoring
6 July 2011, South East
A workshop for anyone who is committed to continuing professional development and wants to become a mentor for the AMA. We will guide you through all stages in the mentoring process.

To book CPD events, email the name, date and location of the event you wish to attend, along with your contact details, to cpd@museumsassociation.org or call 020 7426 6955

Awards

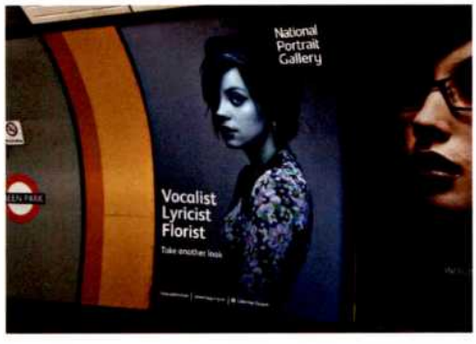
● The winners of the Association for Cultural Enterprises (ACE) Prodir Best Product Awards 2011, which were announced at ACE's annual convention in Cardiff in February, were: **Historic Scotland** (Best Overall Product in 2010); Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew – Kew candles and pocket garden (Best Licensed Product); Natural History Museum, London – Wildlife Photographer of the Year (Best Publication – organisation with a turnover of more than £650,000) Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew – Why People Need Plants (Best Publication, turnover under £650,000); National Gallery, London – Top Trumps (Best Children's Product, turnover more than £650,000; St Paul's Cathedral – Ceramic Jewellery Range (Best New Product/Range, turnover more than £650,000); Historic Scotland – Symbols of Scotland Range (Best New Product/Range, turnover under £650,000).

● Abbey House Museum, Leeds; the Woodhorn Museum and Archive, Northumberland; the Corinium Museum, Cirencester; and the Highland Folk Museum, Newtonmore are among the 20 UK museums on the longlist for the **Guardian Family-Friendly Museum** award 2011. The winner will be announced this month. *www.kidsinmuseums.org.uk*

An advent calendar made for the National Gallery, London, won a best product award at the Association for Cultural Enterprises conference

● The British Museum and the Marsh Trust invite applications for the 2011 **Volunteers for Museum Learning Award**. Winners from each UK region will each receive a £500 prize; an overall winner will receive an additional £2,000. The closing date for applications is 28 April. For information and application forms, visit *www.britishmuseum.org/marshaward*

A campaign for London's National Portrait Gallery has earned its creators, True North, a design award



● Five UK museums and heritage attractions are among the nominees for **European Museum of the Year** Award 2011. The Great North Museum, Newcastle; the Ulster Museum, Belfast; and from London, the Florence Nightingale Museum; the British Music Experience; and the Victoria and Albert Museum join museums from across Europe on the shortlist. The winner will be announced in May. *www.europeanmuseumforum.ru*

● The Globe Gallery, Newcastle, has been awarded the **Investing in Volunteers** quality standard.

● Sandford Awards for Heritage Education have been presented to 37 UK museums and heritage organisations, including **Huntingtower Castle**, Perth, **Chichester District Museum**, the **London Transport Museum,** the **Houses of Parliament** and the **Stockport Air Raid Shelters**. The award recognises heritage sites which have achieved excellence in heritage education through work with schools. *www.heritageeducationtrust.org.uk*

● Museums and galleries in the West Midlands region have been recognised for their work in the Renaissance West Midlands **Best of the West Awards** 2011. The **Herbert Museum and Art Gallery**, Coventry, won awards for the Best Public Relations and Marketing Award, the Best Exhibition on a Shoestring for Roots, and the Outstanding Individual Award (Robin Johnson). The Outstanding Team Award was taken by the **Staffordshire Hoard Volunteers**, Potteries Museum and Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent; and A Sense of Place at **Shire Hall Gallery**, Stafford, won the Best Exhibition category. *http://bestofthewest2011.wordpress.com/*

● The Nash Partnership, the Bath-based regeneration practice, has come second in the heritage category at the recently announced 2010 Royal Town Planning Institutes National Planning Awards for its expansion of the **Blists Hill Victorian Town** in the Ironbridge Gorge.

● **Take Another Look**, a marketing campaign devised for the National Portrait Gallery, London, by branding identity agency True North, has won a silver award at the DBA Design Effectiveness Awards.

Web news

● A website that deals with over 30 **sports museums** and visitor attractions is now live. *www.sportcloseup.co.uk*

Members' meetings

In the summer of 2011 the Museums Association (MA) is launching a series of members' meetings for each devolved nation and English region. These events will be free to attend although they will only be open to members of the MA.

Each members' meeting will run for a full day and include a variety of content related to the region or nation where the meeting will be held. Each day will also include an opportunity to hear about and contribute to the MA's policy, advocacy and project work.

The first meeting will be held in Wales in June 2011, with subsequent meetings being planned over the next year for London, the East Midlands and Yorkshire and Humberside.

More information about the new members' meetings will be posted on the MA website shortly. *www.museumsassociation.org*

This year's Museums Association conference is in Brighton

Museums Association annual conference and exhibition

3-4 October 2011, The Brighton Centre, Brighton

Brighton plays host to the Museums Association Conference and Exhibition 2011. This year we are running the whole event over two days with reduced costs for delegates to attend.

The event is the most important in the museum calendar and a must-attend for all working in museums and galleries, including suppliers of products and services. It brings together UK professionals to debate the latest thinking and discover new ideas.

The preliminary themes for the conference are: *Next top model:* creating the museums of the future; *Innovate:* thinking your way out of the crisis; and *Get connected:* creating and sustaining networks. *For more information visit www.museumsassociation.org/conference*

Three-strap super-elevated shoe by Vivienne Westwood, The Hub, Sleaford

Melanie Kidd

"Dedicated followers of fashion should recognise the handiwork here; these shoes are in a similar style to those that led to Naomi Campbell famously taking a tumble on the catwalk at a Vivienne Westwood show back in 1993.

The actual shoes that brought the supermodel temporarily down to earth are now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, but it is rumoured that Campbell has another pair at home. Rather than attempting to wear them again, however, it is said that she simply uses them as a doorstop.

The one thing all these super-elevated shoes have in common is that they demonstrate how Westwood loves to morph and amplify the human form with her designs.

Melanie Kidd is the head of exhibitions at the Hub: National Centre for Craft and Design, Sleaford, Lincolnshire

She famously referenced the corset in her clothes to emphasise the female form and she took that ethos into footwear. These shoes exaggerate the length of the leg and change the form of the foot while drastically altering the way the wearer stands and moves.

They influence the appearance of the entire body and that's one of the reasons I find them so fascinating. It's not just the pop culture references to the toppling supermodel.

Westwood's historical influences are also evident throughout the exhibition, which is based around the shoes amassed over the past 15 years by a private collector.

Other super-elevated designs include a court shoe developed from her 1990 Portrait collection, which has strong references to a French rococo painting she studied at the Wallace Collection.

And other shoes were inspired by the platforms of up to 30 inches in height – known as 'chopines' – which were extremely popular in the 16th century, particularly in Venice where courtesans used them to increase their visibility and stand out from the competition in the busy city streets.

These shoes can be seen as empowering footwear that bring the wearer increased stature and, therefore, status.

The flip side of that, of course, is that they obviously limit mobility and this raises some uncomfortable questions about whether the pursuit of girl power inevitably entails some sort of stylistic compromise.

They were designed to put the wearer on a pedestal, like a figure in a painting. They are beautiful objects to be looked at and admired in their own right and they can just about be worn as well, but ideally not on the school run."

Interview by John Holt. A Personal Collection of Vivienne Westwood Shoes runs at the Hub until 2 May

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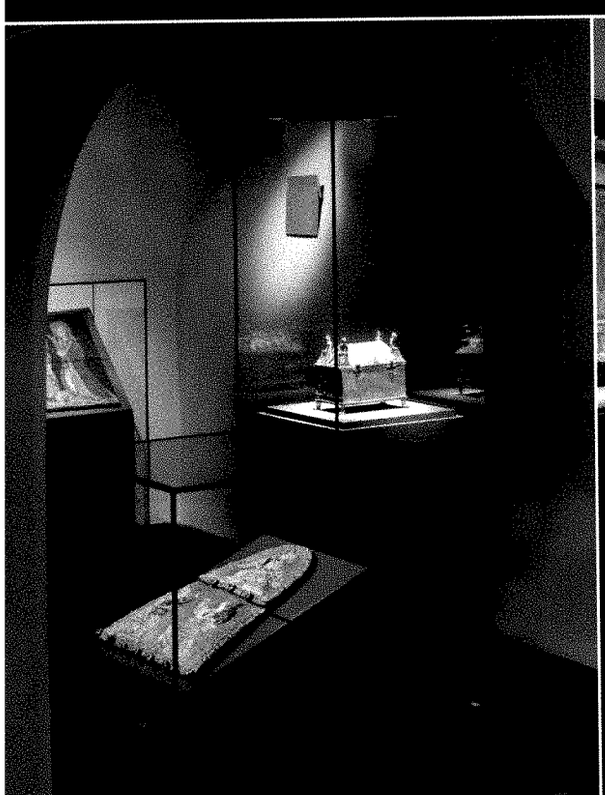

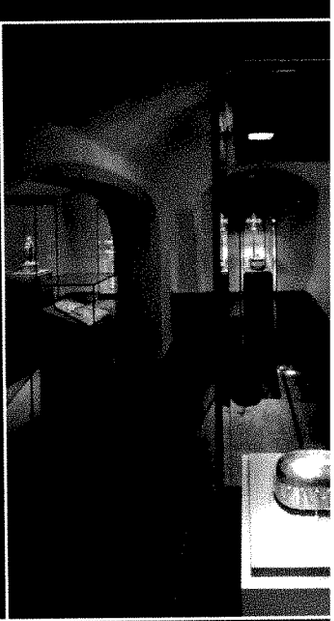

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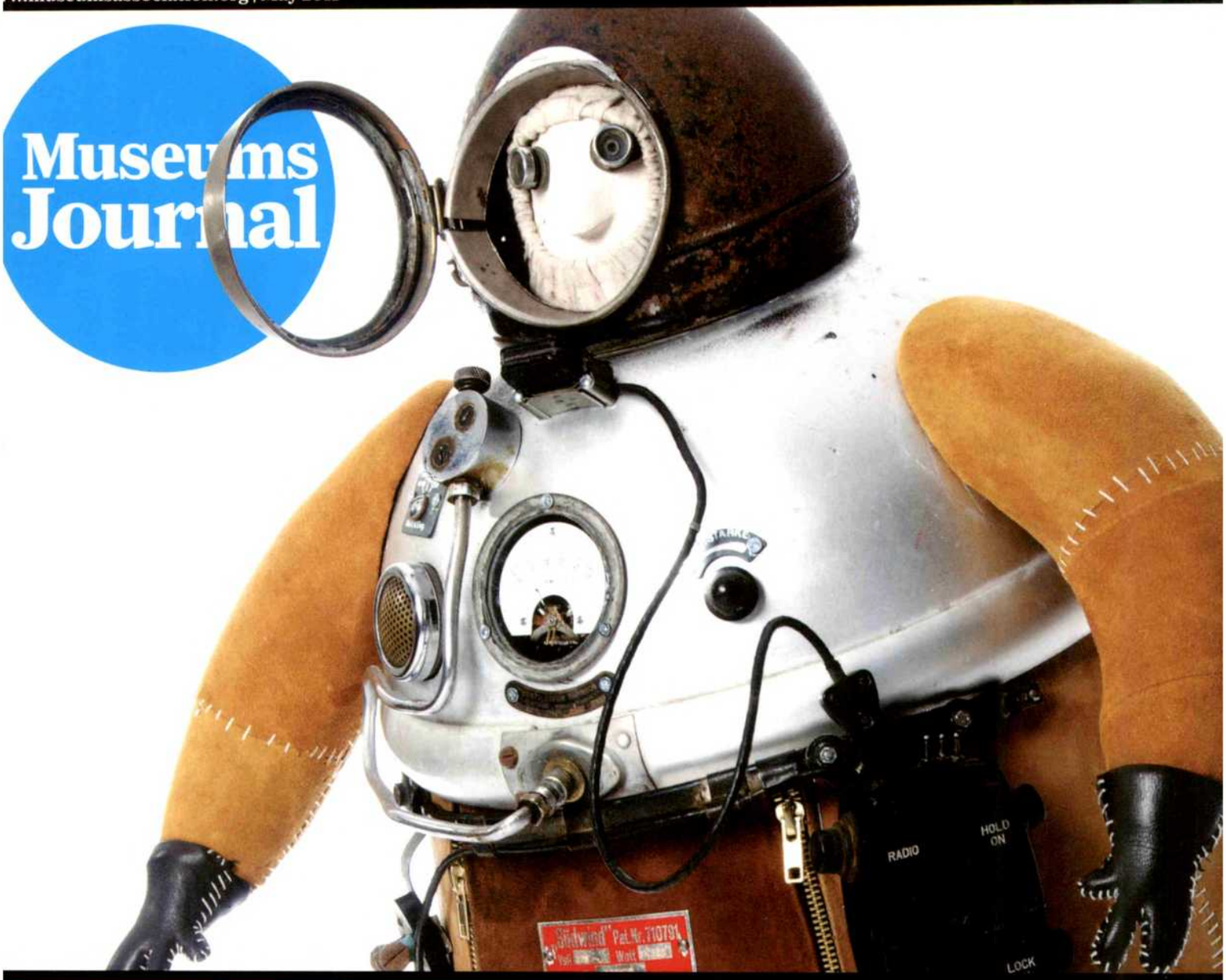

Brave new world Engaging audiences with the history of science

Judgement day
Michael Portillo has his eyes on the prize

Taking a stand
Museums urged to rethink exhibitions in China

Egypt Gallery
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A modest exhibition, but one made with great skill and enthusiasm, writes *Maria Blyzinsky*

Above: toy display at the Melton Carnegie Museum, Melton Mowbray, reviewed on p46

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MAIN COVER IMAGE: MUSEUM OF THE HISTORY OF SCIENCE

Editorial

Sector must stand up to abuses of human rights

It was ironic that on the weekend the National Museum of China opened an exhibition on the Enlightenment, one of its best-known contemporary artists was detained by the authorities for alleged economic crimes.

The Art of the Enlightenment is a joint exhibition put together by the Berlin State Museum, Dresden State Art Collections and the Bavarian State Painting Collections in Munich. Although it presents a rather narrow view of the Enlightenment period, its stated aim is to encourage dialogue and understanding between China and Europe.

What lies behind this initiative is the idea of soft power and cultural diplomacy. To put it crudely, China gets some good press for its newly redeveloped national museum and Germany gets a toehold in a burgeoning market for its cultural and other goods (it's not a coincidence that the exhibition is sponsored by BMW).

The arrest of Ai Weiwei rather undermines this concept of cultural diplomacy and raises serious questions for UK museums that have shows planned in China over the next few years.

'The arrest of Ai Weiwei raises serious questions for UK museums with shows planned in China in the next few years'

The British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) are due to hold a joint exhibition, under the aegis of the British Council, in China next year.

It is significant that while Tate joined the international protest against Weiwei's arrest by putting "Release Ai Weiwei" on the lightbox at the top of Tate Modern, the V&A response is a rather weak-kneed statement that says it hopes he will be released soon – despite the fact that Weiwei's Dropping the Urn artwork will be on display at the V&A in the autumn.

Weiwei has spoken out in favour of universal human rights. He has used his position as an artist to expose inequality and corruption, and he has risked his freedom to do so. It's now time for those in positions of power in the cultural sector to take a stand. And it is time for a different model of international partnership to be constructed.

Sharon Heal, editor, Museums Journal
sharon@museumsassociation.org
www.twitter.com/sharonheal

Bolton withdraws painting from auction following advice from MA

Work removed from sale to raise money for storage

Geraldine Kendell

Bolton council has withdrawn a painting by Victorian landscape artist Alfred Heaton Cooper from auction following criticism by the Museums Association (MA) ethics committee.

Corrie Village, Arran (1896) was one of 36 artworks from Bolton Museum earmarked for sale to raise £500,000 for a new storage facility.

The council previously argued that the work could be auctioned because the artist was born in Manchester and the painting does not depict a scene of Bolton.

But the sale was cancelled after the ethics committee expressed concern that, as Heaton Cooper grew up in Bolton, the painting did not fall outside the museum's core collection.

Maurice Davies: MA's ethics committee wants Bolton to consult public over sale

A council spokesman said: "On balance, we concluded that Corrie Village, Arran should be retained by Bolton Museum due to strong local links with the artist."

The MA's head of policy and communications, Maurice Davies, said: "This is a welcome and speedy response by Bolton council, but the committee made several other points that Bolton needs to address."

The ethics committee has recommended that a full public consultation into the planned sell-off is undertaken, to meet the requirements of the code of ethics.

Seven in 10 regard unpaid internships as exploitative

MA poll reveals culture of unpaid internships at many of the nationals

Patrick Steel

A poll on the Museums Association (MA) website has found that 71% of the sector believe that unpaid internships in museums are exploitative.

The survey follows the publication last month of the government report, Opening Doors, Breaking Barriers, which stated: "It is a fact that obtaining an internship often depends on who, rather than what, you know. Many young people miss out on the opportunity because they lack the necessary contacts or face financial barriers if internships are unpaid."

Research by Labour MP Luciana Berger has revealed a culture of unpaid internships at government-sponsored museums, from a handful of days to nine months' full-time.

The Horniman Museum used 29 unpaid interns between September 2009 and 2010

In the 12-month period to 8 September 2010, Tate had 126 unpaid internships over its four sites; the Horniman Museum had 29; the British Museum had 24; National Museums Liverpool had 22; the National Portrait Gallery had 21; and the Natural History Museum had 20.

The Department of Culture, Media and Sport also had one unpaid internship during this period.

"The figures for internships I have unearthed are merely the tip of the iceberg," said Berger.

"Interning for long periods for free is a hidden scandal. No one should have to work for free."

Maurice Davies, the MA's head of policy and communications, said: "Internships that are paid and openly recruited are obviously a good thing, but unpaid internships place restrictions on which people can take them."

Museums urged to rethink touring exhibition to China

Museums asked to take a stand on Chinese artist Ai Weiwei's detention

Patrick Steel

The former chairman of the Museums Association's (MA) ethics committee has called for the British Council, the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) and the British Museum to rethink plans for a touring exhibition to China following the detention of the artist Ai Weiwei last month.

As part of the British Council-organised festival UK Now, to be held in China next year, the British Museum and V&A are collaborating with the National Museum of China on a major exhibition of Chinese and European ceramics to be shown at the museum in Beijing.

Tristram Besterman, a cultural consultant and former chairman of the MA's ethics committee, said: "Museums should respond [to the detention of Ai Weiwei] on two levels.

Tate Modern displayed 'Release Ai Weiwei' on its lightbox last month

Publicly, they should refrain from endorsing a regime that is repressing artists. But behind that, there should be continued quiet, professional engagement.

"The British Council should think very hard about the exhibition. Although operating at arms-length, it is seen to represent the government.

"If the British Council is seen to be actively engaging like this, the Chinese authorities can manipulate that into an endorsement of their policies. I would be uncomfortable about that."

A British Council spokesman said: "We believe that all artists and cultural institutions should have the freedom to explore and represent their societies through art.

"The arts provide powerful ways of establishing open dialogue between people and cultures, and this is essential to building understanding and trust. We do not support cultural boycotts – dialogue is better than isolation.

"It is a priority of the British Council to give audiences across China opportunities to experience the art, ideas and creative freedom of the UK. It is the British Council's role to forge links between our countries through the arts. UK Now will contribute to this."

Weiwei was detained by police at Beijing airport on 3 April, but as Museums Journal went to press, had not been formally charged.

Weiwei's stance on free speech and human rights has frequently set him against the Chinese government.

Entrance fees are introduced to offset budget cuts

Cuts Monitor reveals the scale and effects of budgets cuts on museums

Gareth Harris

Cuts monitor

Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums introduced charges for facilitated schools' workshops across its 12 venues last month.

Director Iain Watson said: "This brings us into line with many cultural venues that already charge for these services."

Elsewhere, **Gloucester City Council** plans to introduce a £3 entrance fee at the City Museum and Art Gallery and Gloucester Folk Museum, in an effort to cover a £200,000 shortfall in its culture budget.

Both museums are undergoing refurbishment, partially funded by a Heritage Lottery Fund grant, with the city museum set to open this spring.

Meanwhile, **Birmingham City Council** has started charging adult visitors £4 admission at Aston Hall, Blakesley Hall and Soho House, and £3 at Sarehole Mill. Entry remains free for under-16s.

Martin Mullaney, Liberal Democrat councillor and cabinet member for leisure and culture, said all four sites, which have been free since the mid-1990s, faced closure if charges had not been introduced.

Gloucester Folk Museum had introduced a £3 admission charge

The move follows the reintroduction of entry fees at the city's Museum of the Jewellery Quarter in January.

Derby City Council has shut the Silk Mill for two years, saving about £200,000 in running costs as part of a £25m spending squeeze over the next three years.

Grantham Museum shut last month following **Lincolnshire County Council**'s decision last year to withdraw all funding. But the Grantham Community Heritage Association has since taken on the museum, which is set to reopen in three months as a community-owned charitable trust.

In brief

Mansfield top for families

Mansfield Museum in Nottinghamshire has won the 2011 Guardian Family Friendly Museum Award. The shortlist included the Abbey House Museum, Leeds; Corinium Museum, Cirencester; the Horniman, London; Kilmartin House Museum, Argyll; and the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent. The fact that local choirs use the Mansfield museum as a venue counted in its favour.

Scots initiative given £2m

The Scottish government has awarded £2m in extra funding to Portrait of the Nation, the £17.6m project to renovate the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, which is set to reopen in November. Pictured is Alex Nasmyth's portrait of Robert Burns (1787).

MA scheme awards £69k

The Museums Association has awarded £69,000 worth of grants to seven projects in the final round of its Effective Collections scheme. Successful applicants, including Derby Museum Services and Orkney Arts Museum, will use the grants to review and develop their stored collections. Further funding for collections work is available through the Esmée Fairbairn Collections Fund.

Welsh funding unveiled

CyMAL: Museums Archives and Libraries Wales has announced that museums in Wales will receive more than £460,000 as part of a £2.8m 2011-12 funding package for museums, libraries and archives. Grants totalling £346,515 have been allocated to 28 museum-related projects. The remaining money will go towards delivering the Museum Strategy for Wales 2010-15.

Country life: Salisbury museum to showcase John Constable paintings of the local area

The Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum is to stage an exhibition of John Constable works. Constable and Salisbury: the Soul of Landscape, which is being curated by the scholar Timothy Wilcox, will run from 20 May to 25 September. Constable made more paintings and drawings in and around Salisbury than of any other area, apart from the Stour Valley, where he grew up. The exhibition will also include works depicting nearby areas such as Weymouth bay and Stonehenge (above), which are both on loan from the Victoria and Albert Museum.

V&A in loan to Horniman

New home for 35 V&A musical instruments

Gareth Harris

The Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) has loaned 35 musical instruments to the Horniman Museum for three years following the V&A's controversial decision to remove its instruments collection from display early last year.

The instruments are on show in the Horniman's Art of Harmony exhibition, while an additional three objects are in the museum's Music Gallery. There are plans to show other pieces from the V&A's 276-piece collection in this space at a later date.

Meanwhile, the Edinburgh University Collection of Historic Musical Instruments is still in discussions with the V&A about borrowing works (*Museums Journal, March 2010*).

Anger at Exeter's £9m overspend

Lib Dem councillor seeks answers on Royal Albert Memorial's revamp

Gareth Harris

An overspend of £9.3m on the redevelopment of the Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM) in Exeter has been criticised by a city councillor.

Liberal Democrat Kevin Mitchell told local press that "the public deserves to know why the council is borrowing money to ensure that this vital project is completed".

The original budget for the RAMM's refurbishment was £15m. The museum is scheduled to reopen in December, but was originally due to open last year.

Exeter City Council has been the main funder of the revamp. The Heritage Lottery Fund has allocated £10m, while the DCMS/Wolfson Fund and Garfield Weston Foundation have provided smaller awards.

The work has been delayed because the museum was sinking into Exeter Castle's defence ditch

A museum spokesman said the overspend was mainly the result of delays following the discovery that the Norman defence ditch of Exeter Castle, over which the rear part of the museum was built in the 1880s, is considerably deeper than original surveys showed.

"This led to substantial redesign and lengthy safety works to protect the building, which was sinking into the ditch," he added.

But Mitchell said "a large proportion of the overspend is due to other factors which arguably can be attributed to actions and decisions made at the beginning of the project, and these are still not in the public domain".

A council spokesman said the complications caused by the ditch were the main reason for the budget rise. "Until the building project comes to an end, the council cannot air the issues in public, as this could prejudice its contractual position," he added.

The redevelopment involves building a gallery parallel to the city's Roman wall that will provide more space for temporary exhibitions.

Minister wants review of Ulster Museum content

MA criticises Northern Ireland culture minister for widening scope of museum review

Gareth Harris

The decision by the Northern Ireland minister for culture, arts and leisure to expand a review of Ulster Museum "to consider matters such as curatorial interpretation and presentation" has been criticised by Mark Taylor, director of the Museums Association.

Democratic Unionist politician Nelson McCausland has requested that the evaluation of the £17.9m refurbishment of the museum, which reopened in 2009, encompasses curatorial issues.

"This is a slippery slope," said Taylor. "It's obviously not a black-and-white issue because museums do not operate in a vacuum detached from their audiences. But it is a government's responsibility to cover corporate planning, strategy and finance, and not make professional decisions about displays."

Ulster Museum reopened in 2009 after a £17.9m refit

National Museums Northern Ireland (NMNI), which is undertaking the appraisal, said: "As part of an ongoing development, and with a view to building upon the achievements at Ulster Museum, a wide-ranging evaluation of the refurbishment project is being undertaken, which will include peer reviews of permanent gallery content and approaches."

Last spring McCausland wrote to the NMNI trustees calling for more prominence to be given to the Ulster-Scots story and the Orange Order in NMNI displays, particularly the 2010 Plantation to Power Sharing exhibition at Ulster Museum.

"I raised these issues to ensure that national museums' exhibitions fully reflect the historical, cultural, religious and political rights of all citizens of Northern Ireland within the context of a shared future," said McCausland.

An NMNI spokesman said that the permanent galleries at Ulster Museum have not been changed since it reopened in October 2009.

McCausland has also called on Ulster Museum to recognise creationism as an alternative view of the origin of the universe.

Museums urged to tackle succession planning

MA tookit to help boost how knowledge is shared

Rebecca Atkinson

Museums making staff redundant are being urged to think carefully about succession planning or risk specialist knowledge about collections being lost.

The warning coincides with the publication of the Museums Association's (MA) Monument Fellowship Toolkit, which aims to help museums improve how they share collections knowledge and skills, to help museums address succession planning.

Maurice Davies, head of policy and communication at the MA, said: "The sector has always struggled to retain specialist knowledge, but this issue is now more topical than ever as museums are forced to make cuts and redundancies.

"Museums can now use the guidance from the toolkit and create their own fellowship programmes for expert staff who are leaving."

The toolkit is published this month on the MA website, alongside an issue of Museum Practice exploring approaches to succession planning and sharing knowledge, from hands-on mentoring to video guides.

Jack Kirby, collections interpretation manager at Thinktank science museum in Birmingham, which took part in the fellowship programme, said: "[Succession planning] is always a consideration from a business contingency perspective, and in difficult times, it's vital that skills don't leave if personnel do."

Redundancies can lead to specialist knowledge about collections being lost

Capturing information is even more of an issue when outgoing staff are not being replaced, he added.

There are also concerns about the rise of project-based curatorships and the merging of two or more curatorial posts into a single role.

Michael Terwey, senior exhibitions organiser at the National Media Museum and chairman of the Social History Curators Group, said: "The worry is that good museum work depends on an understanding of collections – without that, exhibitions run the risk of failing to make the most of the resources available."

www.museumsassociation.org/museum-practice

In brief

Family learning guide
The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education have produced an online resource to help museums and archives embed family learning in their strategic development. The guide outlines government priorities and offers planning tools and case studies for family learning programmes.
http://bit.ly/hPM8D1

Ex-MA president retires
Virginia Tandy has retired as director of culture at Manchester City Council after 13 years with the authority. Starting out as director of Manchester City Galleries, Tandy oversaw the £35m expansion of Manchester Art Gallery and established the Manchester Museums Consortium. She also served as president of the Museums Association from 2006-08.

Ulster buys Titanic relics

The Ulster Folk and Transport Museum has acquired more than 7,000 items from the Titanic's parent company, White Star Line. The collection includes serving dishes and soap from the ill-fated ocean liner, as well as passenger lists, tickets, uniforms and diaries. The objects will be on display at TITANICa: The Exhibition from 31 May.

Human remains advice
Museums Galleries Scotland has issued new guidance on its website for the care of human remains in collections. The non-prescriptive guide contains ethical and procedural principles for the handling and display of remains, and offers up-to-date legal advice specific to Scotland based on the Human Tissue (Scotland) Act 2006.
http://bit.ly/furOPi

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Building site: an exhibition of works by Patricia Cain tells the story of the Riverside Museum

Glasgow-based artist Patricia Cain has become a familiar figure on the building site of the city's Zaha Hadid-designed Riverside Museum, documenting the evolution of the £74m project since construction began in 2007. An exhibition of her architectural drawings, paintings and sculptures, Drawings (on) Riverside, opened last month at Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum ahead of the transport museum's launch on 21 June. Pictured is Construction of the Architectural Installation by Patricia Cain and Ann Nisbet. Drawings (on) Riverside runs at the gallery until 14 August.

Skills project's diversity focus

Training scheme for young people in heritage

Geraldine Kendall

A new skills training project to promote workforce diversity is offering 12 placements to young people at heritage organisations.

Strengthening our Common Life (SOCL) aims to boost the number of 18- to 25-year-olds from minority faith and ethnic backgrounds working in the heritage sector.

Participants receive a bursary of £13,500 a year for traineeships lasting between nine and 18 months, after which they are awarded a diploma in cultural heritage.

The project is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and managed by arts and heritage charity Cultural Cooperation.

Bristol Museums, Galleries and Archives and the Horniman Museum in London are among the organisations offering placements.

HLF ups its contribution towards Bristol's M Shed to £11.65m

Additional £1.39m grant includes £560,000 for unforeseen costs

Patrick Steel

The Bristol Museums Development Trust (BMDT) has received £560,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) towards unforeseen costs for Bristol's new social history museum, M Shed.

These costs include the removal and disposal of contaminated waste on the site, which was worse than the council had expected, and extensive repair works to the building, a 1950s harbourside transit shed.

The funding is part of a £1.39m HLF grant, awarded last month, which will also go towards the museum's £27m build cost.

The trust needs to raise a further £1.3m before the museum opens on 17 June.

The cost of the M Shed has gone up from £22m to £27m

Bristol City Council has underwritten the project and will meet any shortfall.

Adrian Tinniswood, the chairman of the trust, said of the HLF funding: "This is a psychological boost. I honestly don't see a possibility now of us not finding it [the remaining funding].

"There are tentative pledges in already, there is a public appeal and there are naming rights for the galleries."

The unforeseen costs are the latest in a series of setbacks that have included wrangles over the design of the museum, costs increasing from £22m to £27m, and the opening date pushed back from late 2009 to spring 2011.

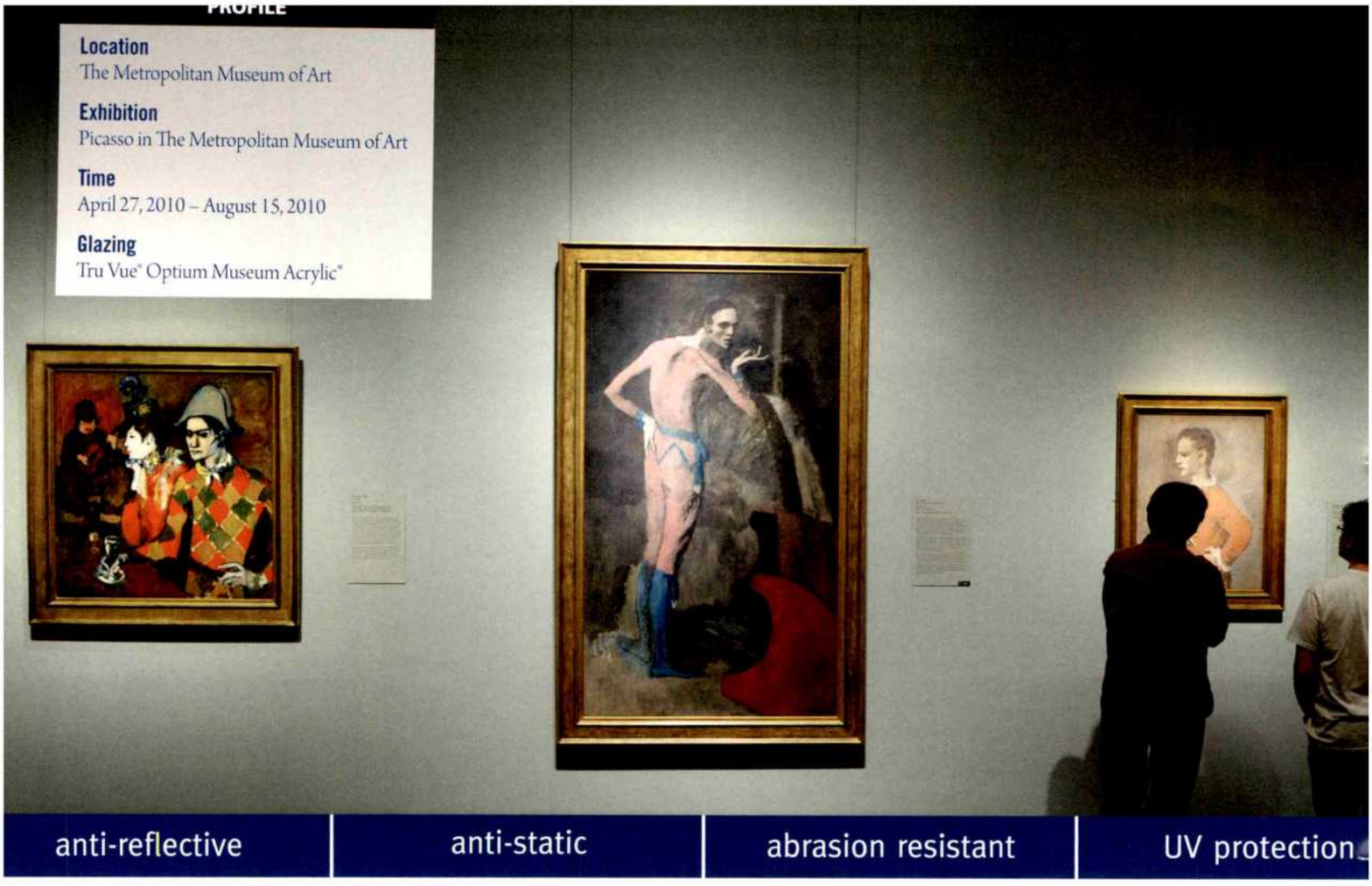
The grant brings the total HLF contribution to £11.65m, while Bristol City Council has pledged £12.82m. Cadbury has donated £20,000, with others pledging money including Rolls-Royce, the Department of Energy and Climate Change, and South West Screen.

The council has also accepted a donation of £250,000 from Imperial Tobacco, seemingly at odds with its pledge to support promotional and educational campaigns to discourage smoking.

Tinniswood said: "It is problematic, and came before the trust was set up, but I'm not sure I would turn the money away.

"I wouldn't call it dirty money. One wants to see the museum open."

M Shed will feature 1,800sq m of exhibition space, including three permanent galleries and a rooftop temporary-exhibition space. It will also host a cafe, learning studio, shop, conservation workshops and public spaces for live performance.



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Government to discuss how to fuel philanthropy

Consultation to take place about offering tax incentives for leaving artworks to nation

Gareth Harris

The government will consult this year on proposals to encourage donations of pre-eminent works of art or historical objects to the nation in return for a tax reduction.

The proposals, which are part of a tax initiative package announced by chancellor George Osborne in the March budget aimed at boosting cultural philanthropy, were welcomed by the Art Fund.

"Currently, individuals in the UK are better off waiting until after death to give a work of art to the nation, as it can then be offset against inheritance tax," the charity said in a statement.

"But there is nothing to encourage the lifetime donation of art."

The Art Fund has forwarded a proposal to the Treasury that involves extending the Acceptance in Lieu scheme, which allows public collections to acquire works of art in settlement of inheritance tax, to income tax and capital gains tax.

An Ottoman tankard acquired by the V&A last month through the Acceptance in Lieu scheme with help from the Art Fund

Osborne will also reduce the rate of inheritance tax by 10% for estates leaving 10% or more to charity from April 2012, a move that he says could result in a cash injection of about £300m.

Charities will be able to claim Gift Aid tax relief on up to £5,000 of small donations annually, usually raised through collection tins, without the need for Gift Aid declarations.

The chancellor also increased the Gift Aid benefit limit from £500 to £2,500, boosting the amount organisations can spend on thanking donors.

Mark Jones, director of the Victoria and Albert Museum, said: "I welcome the budget announcement of a new incentive to leave money to charities.

"This is an excellent opportunity to make people more aware of the good they can do by leaving money and a reminder of the need to thank and value those who have pledged a legacy."

In December, as part of the Philanthropy in the Arts Agenda, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and Arts Council England announced plans to invest £80m in a series of match-fund schemes designed to raise an equivalent amount or more from private donors.

A subsequent consultation undertaken by the thinktank Arts Quarter, which canvassed more than 600 employees in the cultural sector, highlighted the "urgent need to effectively reform the UK tax system".

Fifty per cent of respondents also felt that "it could take at least 10 to 20 years to see the desired uplift in philanthropy in the arts".

Royal Armouries makes 17 redundancies

Steps taken to reduce spending by £3.4m

Rebecca Atkinson

The Royal Armouries Museum in Leeds has made its four-strong education team redundant as part of a review to reduce spending by £3.4m over four years.

In total, 17 roles have been axed, including all nine of the museum's horse riders, actors and stable staff. The museum's jousting events will now be outsourced.

A spokeswoman said a new-look education service would be introduced in September, which would come under the remit of a new visitor services department.

The museum is looking to create 19 roles, which will combine visitor service duties with delivering interpretation and education activities.

John Reeve, chairman of the Group for Education in Museums, said: "It's grotesque but not surprising that what is core and essential one day – and highly visible in funding applications and annual reports – suddenly isn't the next when the wind (and government) changes."

Jousting events will be outsourced

Six posts have also been made redundant at the Royal Armouries' Fort Nelson.

Meanwhile, the Museum of London has made 11 voluntary redundancies, including three senior curators, two collection care experts and six front-of-house staff. It will create a senior curator role combining pre-history and Roman history.

Funding news

Open Prism

Several changes have been made to the fund for the **Preservation of Industrial and Scientific Material** (Prism), which is now open for applications.

The fund, which switches to **Arts Council England** from the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, supports the acquisition and/or conservation of science, industry or technology objects.

It covers England and Wales, and **£150,000** is available for 2011-12, down from £250,000.

The key changes are:

- Applicants can apply for grants of between £500 and £12,000 (the upper limit was previously £20,000).
- Organisations that have received Prism grants in the previous two financial years will not be given priority.
- Up to 50% of in-kind contribution to a project can be provided in the form of volunteer labour.

The **MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund**, a parallel fund to Prism, supports the acquisition of objects relating to the arts, literature and history. It has just released details of the 143 grants it awarded in 2010-11, which totalled **£900,627**.

Seventy-eight organisations received support, but demand outstripped available funds despite applications for more expensive purchases not being accepted in the second half of the year. The Purchase Grant Fund has been cut by £300,000 to **£600,000 for 2011-12**.

In other funding news, **HM Revenue & Customs** has updated its Gift Aid forms and its advice on donor benefits following the budget.

www.mla.gov.uk/what/support/grants/PRISM
www.vam.ac.uk/resources/purchase_grant
www.hmrc.gov.uk

Simon Stephens

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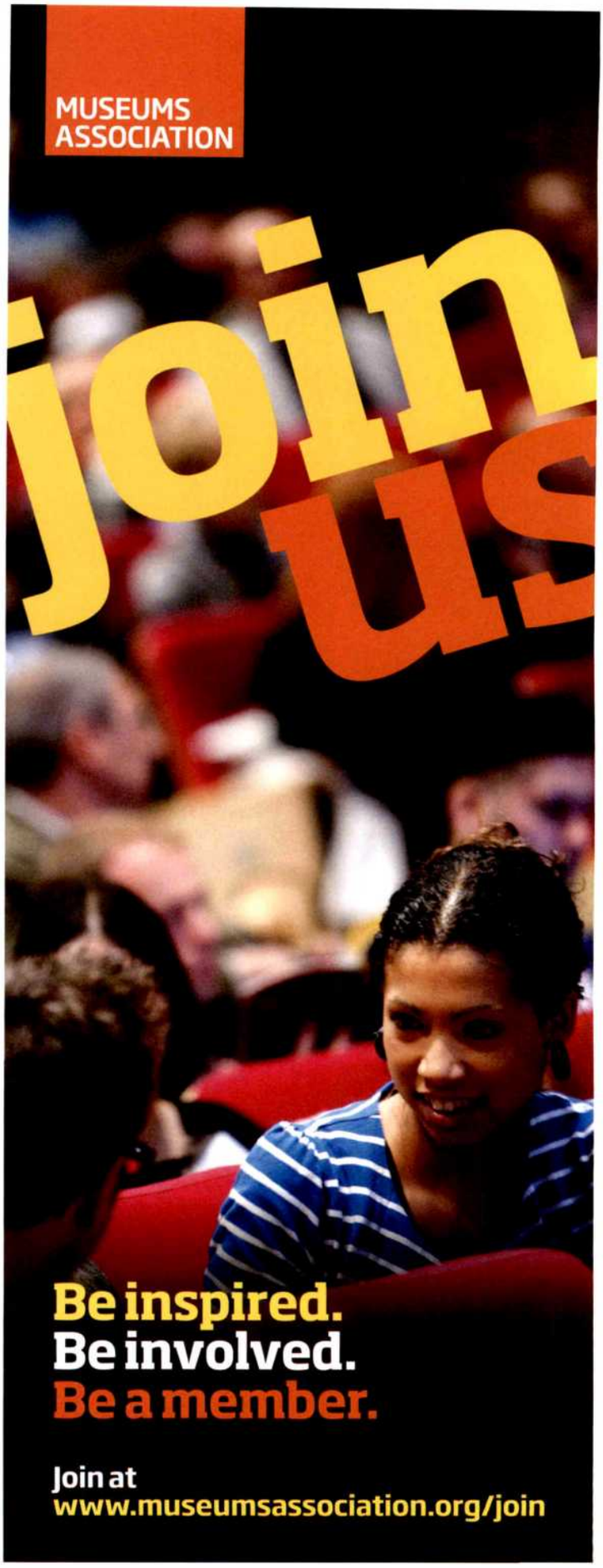

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Art Fund to increase its acquisitions budget to £7m

Organisation to boost fund by 56% by 2014 and finance a curatorial trainee scheme

Rebecca Atkinson

The Art Fund is to increase its acquisition fund by 56% over the next four years and fund a curatorial trainee scheme with two regional museums.

The organisation's annual funding for museums and galleries to acquire works will increase from £4.5m to £7m by 2014. It is anticipated that the extra money will be generated by enhancements to Art Fund membership, including the launch of an art pass that entitles holders to free entry to 200 museums and galleries and 50% off entry to major exhibitions.

Art Fund director Stephen Deuchar said many museum directors were concerned that acquisitions would no longer be possible in light of local and national funding cuts. "Museums can't stop collecting – acquisitions are their lifeblood... and the Art Fund must and can do more to respond to this significant challenge," he added.

One of two postcard-sized watercolours by JMW Turner donated to the Abbotsford Trust through the Art Fund

The curatorial scheme will run from September 2011 to June 2013. Two curators will work on specific projects and training around pre-1900 European painting at the National Gallery and a regional museum partner.

Museums and trainees are being invited to apply to take part in the scheme.

The Art Fund's head of programmes, Sarah Philp, said: "Supporting curatorial expertise, particularly within regional museums, is a core element of our funding programme."

Nicholas Penny, director of the National Gallery, added: "Curatorial expertise in regional museums has been greatly reduced in recent years and it is certain that the cuts will make things worse.

"We are joining forces with the Art Fund to do something to halt this decline and ensure that discerning collecting for regional collections, and a deep understanding of what those collections include, continues in the future."

Sky in £1.7m arts funding

TV channel to back artists and projects

Geraldine Kendall

Sky Arts has launched a £1.65m fund to develop arts projects and emerging artists over the next three years.

The Sky Arts Ignition fund will offer two complementary funding strands.

The Sky Arts Ignition Series will invest up to £200,000 in each of six arts projects aimed at developing new work.

The Sky Arts Ignition: Futures Fund, is designed to support emerging talent. Each year, five bursaries of £30,000 will be available to individual artists at the start of their careers.

The broadcasting corporation will use its platform to bring the results to a wider audience.

Sky's chief executive Jeremy Darroch said he hoped the initiative would "come as a welcome boost to the arts industry".

World news digest

Abu Dhabi: More than 100 high-profile artists and curators have backed an online petition in protest at working conditions for labourers building the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi on Saadiyat Island. Artists including Mona Hatoum and Shirin Neshat say they will not display their work in the museum because of "human rights violations".

Australia: The Art Gallery of New South Wales in Sydney will open a 3,300sq m space this month to display the modern and contemporary art holdings of the Hungarian-born Australian collector John Kaldor. The collection, which consists of more than 200 works with an estimated value of A$35m, includes works by Robert Rauschenberg and Sol LeWitt.

China: High-profile artist Ai Weiwei was arrested by Chinese authorities last month at Beijing airport as he was about to board a plane to Hong Kong. Tate released a statement saying it was "dismayed by developments that again threaten Weiwei's right to speak freely as an artist and hope that he will be released immediately".

France: Iran has cut ties with the Louvre, saying that the Paris museum has failed to honour a 2004 cultural cooperation agreement to set up an exhibition of Persian artefacts in Iran.

Japan: An exhibition of more than 80 major impressionist works at the Hiroshima Prefectural Art Museum was delayed last month because of concerns over the Fukushima nuclear power plant disaster. About 50 of the works are on loan from French museums, and the country's ministry of culture halted the show.

US: A $4.2bn subway line planned for Los Angeles, with exits outside the Museum of Contemporary Art, Natural History Museum and Los Angeles County Museum of Art, is set to be completed by 2022. Meanwhile, more than 60 cultural institutions from southern California are joining forces this October to create Pacific Standard Time: Art in L.A. 1945-1980, a six-month project reflecting the rise of LA's arts scene.

Sol LeWitt's Wall drawing at the new John Kaldor Family Gallery at the Art Gallery of New South Wales

US: The Russian government has demanded that 37 works on loan from Moscow's Andrei Rublev Museum to the Museum of Russian Icons in Massachusetts are returned to Russia. The objects were on display in the exhibition Treasures from Moscow, which runs until 25 July. Gordon Lankton, the museum's founder, said the decision was linked to a legal dispute involving the return of a Jewish archive from Russia to the US.

Compiled by Gareth Harris. Seen in the Art Newspaper, Chunichi Shimbun, Guardian and Agence France Presse

ESTATE OF SOL LEWITT/ARS

The National Gallery Curatorial Traineeships supported by the Art Fund

The National Gallery and the Art Fund are working together on a new programme to offer two fully funded Curatorial Traineeships with two regional museums, to begin in September 2011.

We are now inviting applications from regional museums who wish to work in partnership with us on this exciting new initiative.

The partnership will deliver essential and practical curatorial training both at the National Gallery and the regional museum partner, where the Trainee will work on a collections/object and research-based project with a definable, beneficial outcome for this museum. The project should fall within the remit of European Paintings pre-1900 and the regional museum partners are expected to have a relevant paintings collection.

For more information and an application form, contact

Mary Hersov, National Programmes Manager, National Gallery (mary.hersov@ng-london.org.uk)

or Sarah Philp, Head of Programmes, the Art Fund (sphilp@artfund.org)

Deadline for applications is Friday 27 May 2011

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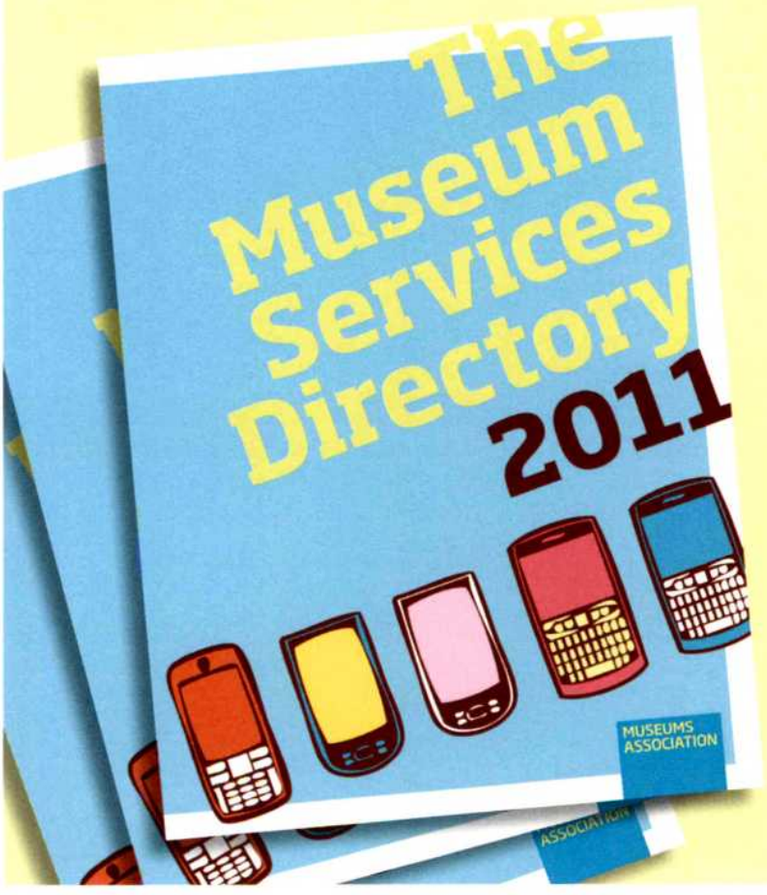

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Arts council focus on frontline

Development agencies bear brunt of ACE cuts

Simon Stephens

The recent Arts Council England (ACE) announcement about which organisations would be part of its new national portfolio brought mixed news.

But for audience development agencies, it was uniformly bad: none of the seven agencies which have been receiving ACE support under the regularly funded organisations (RFOs) system were given national portfolio status. The arts council argued that it had made a strategic decision to cut the number of what it calls "intermediate organisations" that it has funded.

There are 12 audience development agencies in the UK. Of the eight in England, seven received regular funding, accounting for £1.25m (0.4%) of ACE's RFO investment.

Audience development agencies were shocked by the decision. They said they had applied for national portfolio status in good faith and believed their applications would be judged on individual merit, rather than a blanket decision by ACE to end support for this area of work.

The backdrop to the ACE decision is a wider government agenda to concentrate resources on "frontline services" and reduce the number of quangos.

In July last year, communities secretary Eric Pickles questioned the role of audience development officers. This was followed in October by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's announcement that 19 of the 55 quangos it supported would be abolished or reformed. This included the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), which will be incorporated into ACE by 1 October.

Winner: Turner Contemporary, which opened last month, is one of the new national portfolio holders

ACE has not only cut support for audience development agencies, but has turned down applications for national portfolio funding by other organisations that support the arts, most notably the Visual Arts and Galleries Association.

The decision to reduce the number of intermediate organisations that ACE supports is part of a strategy to focus funding on individual arts organisations, rather than those that provide support to them.

Creativity, Culture and Education, which delivered Creative Partnerships, had its funding cut in half by ACE last year. In its place, £10.5m of lottery money will be devoted each year to help the national portfolio organisations connect the work produced by arts bodies to communities and school.

ACE is also hoping to create a small number of "leadership" organisations that will take responsibility for the development of the arts. The idea is that individual arts organisations, rather than intermediate agencies, will spread expertise to those who have less resources and capacity.

Some intermediate agencies did gain national portfolio funding. These include the National Skills Academy Creative & Cultural, which oversees a network of training providers and employers that support the skills needs of the creative and cultural industries.

But overall, the idea of funding intermediate agencies has been rejected, and this is frustrating for those involved in areas such as audience development.

Audiences UK, a national network of audience development agencies, has argued that a blanket decision not to fund their work is hard to understand in the context of the priority ACE is giving to increasing and broadening audiences in its 10-year Achieving Great Art for Everyone strategy.

Audience development agencies say they provide effective and cheap ways to deliver broader and increased audiences for the arts.

However, now the dust has settled since the ACE funding announcement, the future does not look entirely bleak for audience development agencies. Arts council funding makes up about 20% of their income, and many have a range of revenue streams.

Moreover, Audiences UK says the ACE decision is not a vote of no confidence, more that ACE does not see regular funding as the best way to support this activity. The arts council has said it will be looking into ways in which it can build on this work, albeit with a focus on programmes of activity and reduced overheads.

Audience development agencies will be able to apply for ACE's £48m Grants for the Arts scheme, which is for project work. Unlike RFOs, national portfolio organisations will no longer be able to access this funding stream, which ACE says will free up £12m a year.

Audience development agencies are now hoping for clarity and direction as to how much money for audience development projects would be available under Grants for the Arts.

So what are the implications for museums, now that the functions of the MLA are being transferred to ACE?

Understanding audiences and their needs is one of the areas of work that museums have made progress on in the past decade. Much of this work has been carried out collaboratively, often through bodies that could be described as intermediate agencies. Indeed, some museums have been working closely with arts council-funded audience development agencies.

Many museums will be unwilling to see the networks that have sprung up to support this work threatened.

ACE funding at a glance

- A 29.6% cut to ACE 2011-2015 budget – 14.9% passed on to portfolio organisations.
- ACE received 1,333 applications to join the national portfolio, submitting bids for a total of £1.4bn.
- The available grant-in-aid budget for the portfolio for the same period was £950m.
- Of ACE's current 849 regularly funded organisations, 791 chose to apply, and 585 were successful.
- Of the 542 new organisations that applied, 110 were successful.
- There will be 695 national portfolio holders.

Natural disasters can bring us together

Yoshi Miki

The Municipal History Museum in Rikuzen, Takata, was washed away by the tsunami with two curators. We have not been able to find them. The tsunami reached the third floor of the town's city hall. Most of public buildings in the area were razed to the ground. Only debris was left, nothing else.

Records show that an earthquake in 869 AD, with an estimated magnitude 7, was the biggest in the history of the region and that the tsunami that followed it reached 4 kilometres inland. This March's tsunami surpassed it. It reached 5 kilometres inland with an earthquake of magnitude 8 or 9.

At the beginning of April, the Ministry of Culture and Science reported that 443 registered cultural properties were damaged including 21 "national treasures". In some cities it is impossible to get to close to buildings because they are not safe. Here in the north east, many museums are public institutions and museum curators are government officials before they are museum professionals. Their priority is to help people and assist restoring public services.

The disaster at the nuclear power plant has made things worse. Where buildings remain, staff are having a hard time maintaining conditions in storage and galleries because of power shortages.

Even in Tokyo, a shortage of gas and trucks makes it hard for museums to prepare for exhibitions. Scheduled power cuts have led to cuts in opening hours and major museums are cancelling or postponing exhibitions.

Fifteen years ago, an earthquake hit my home town Kobe in central Japan. Five thousand people died. Many museums were damaged and museum workers throughout Japan formed a rescue team. They came to the city within a few days and started helping us.

When I stood on a street where I grew up and where none of the historical buildings survived, I felt a big loss in my heart. We lost something we could have passed on to the next generation. People will soon look to museums to rediscover their past. We need to get back to normal as soon as possible to give them confidence and hope.

Kobe helped us learn about how to deal with a disaster. The Association of Museums in Japan published many reports based on the experience in Kobe. Sharing information and maintaining our professional community helps when disaster hits. Since the recent earthquake I have received many emails and calls from all around the world asking if I am all right and if there is anything the international community can do to help.

The fact that everyone is watching us is encouraging. When the condition of each museum started coming in through our network, I knew exactly who to talk to offer assistance. Things go faster when you work together and trust each other.

The government has established the Museum Rescue Network and has informed people how the system works so that staff know what they can do. In the case of Kobe, people acted on their own initiative and the volunteer rescue team was established quickly. This time, with the government's involvement, it started rather slowly but the scale of the disaster is different and we need the system.

A curator whose collection was severely damaged has talked about opening up gallery space for artists so that they can work with children who have lost their homes and schools. This is a good sign. He is thinking positive, not looking back.

Yoshi Miki is a curatorial consultant and visiting professor at the National Museum of Japanese History in Sakura. He lives in San Francisco. Thanks to Ikuma Hirota for his help with this article

The diary of a national museum director *Part 12*

One Saturday a few weeks ago, the oiks – including a few regional museum oiks, I suspect – were out en masse in London complaining about losing their jobs. How on earth do they expect the economy to recover if there aren't sacrifices?

Typically, a portion of them started to riot, leaving a trail of devastation behind them (I was very upset about the damage to F&M).

Fortunately, my younger brother Hector is in the forces with Wills, so I was glad to get out of London to attend Wills' secret stag do in the West Country.

Harry and a couple of his friends used their RAF helicopters to ferry us down to the country pile they had "borrowed" for the weekend. The first night was fine. I gave them an impromptu two-hour tour of the property, pointing out the Meissen ceramics collection and several fine Constables.

Halfway round, Harry began to shift about on his feet, making faces and grinning like a monkey. We then had a lively and drunken dinner, but no harm done.

Unfortunately, things got out of hand on the second night. Harry and his friends all came to dinner dressed in their Nazi uniforms. There were toasts to "Edward VIII" and "Oswald Mosley". When I tried to intervene, they started to trash the Meissen and would have burned the Constables if I hadn't interposed my body.

The whole incident was hushed up, of course. Harry paid off the owner from his Civil List money. When I told one of my staff what had happened, she pointed out the similarity between Harry's friends' behaviour and the demonstrators. I quickly corrected her. No, I said. The difference is that the London rioters were politically motivated.

Can happiness be found in our museums?

Tony Butler

The limits of exponential growth have been challenged by the current economic crisis. Before the downturn, by proving museum's work contributed to the economic potential of a locality, we got more money. With more money, we got to do more stuff for more people.

Climate change and resource scarcity presents further ethical and moral challenges to industrial economies based on high levels of consumption.

The use of the word happiness may appear trite when set alongside other progressive notions such as social justice. Yet a preoccupation with economic growth has made real social justice more elusive.

The Happy Museum Project was launched in March with funding from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. The Museum of East Anglian Life asked the New Economics Foundation and some museum thinkers to write a paper, The Happy Museum, to challenge the sector to incubate high well-being, sustainable organisations.

The paper proposes that museums are in a great position to use their popularity to encourage the public to face the challenges of climate change, resource scarcity and to increase happiness.

In particular, museum, should find ways to have more mutual relationships with communities and visitors, perhaps considering the possibility of becoming mutual organisations or cooperatives. They should value and protect natural and cultural environments and be sensitive to the impact of the museum and its visitors on them.

It's also important to measure what matters. Counting visitors tells us nothing about the quality of their experience or the contribution to their well-being. Ask your audience how your work affects them emotionally. Talk to people, understand what makes them feel happier, measure that.

Museum learning is already all the things much orthodox learning is not: it is curiosity driven; non-compulsory; informal. Society needs people who are resilient, creative and empathetic systems-thinkers, exactly the kind of capacities museum learning can support.

Many museums do appreciate their position at the heart of their community. The Happy Museum Project shows that the context is now different. Climate change, pressures on the planet's finite resources and awareness that a happy society need not set economic growth as its most meaningful measure, offer us a chance to re-imagine the purpose of the museums. Museums should realise their role as connectors, viewing people not just as audiences, but as collaborators, not as beneficiaries but stewards who will pass on knowledge to their friends and neighbours.

Tony Butler is the director of the Museum of East Anglian Life, Stowmarket, Suffolk. www.happymuseumproject.org

The insider

We're all ears for crowd-pleasing ideas

Maev Kennedy

Oh Lord, Museums at Night already and we haven't even got the infernal Easter bunny out of the way.

I do think commissioning it from Antony Gormley was worth it for the publicity – still chuckling at that Willy Wonky crack on the local newspaper. But who would have thought 300 cubic metres of chocolate would take up so much space? Getting at least the ears into the stores has helped, but I dread to think of the final bill for the air con running full blast 24 hours a day.

Thanks for all of your suggestions for activities and events, some frankly more helpful than others. We probably won't, actually, take up the idea for the parent and child hands-on Egyptology session, Embalm Your Mummy. And by the same token, I just think the Bog Off, ritual sacrifice in the lily-pond concept, is going to be more trouble than it's worth.

I do find the idea of squid ink and black truffle risotto in the cafe with all the lights out appealing, but I think we'll probably steer clear of that entire area after last year. So unfortunate that our council member for museums and storm drains chose the very next day to visit, and I was never quite sure that he was entirely convinced that the Marmite and ketchup wall painting was a teaser for our Rothko show.

Sooner or later he's going to figure out that our partnership with the Tate means they're sending us a peanut butter jar of sunflower seeds, not the entire Rothko room.

Ah! Yes, that could work. Do we still have all those icepicks from the Beardmore Glacier climbing wall on the top landing that the safety officer hated? So, Dark and Milk? Bring a bucket, borrow an icepick, take away your own sweet masterpiece, all you can sculpt, eat or carry for a fiver?

By candle light, I think, then Willy might look slightly more like a Maypole than Easter without ears. Anything left over, I think we'll just have to have Year 3 from Saint Aloysius in again – heaven knows if they ate the Rothko mural they'll eat anything.

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Investing in culture is investing in the future

Peter Box

When people think of Wakefield I wonder if they also think of the 20th century's most influential and famous sculptors, Henry Moore and Barbara Hepworth?

Both were born in the Wakefield district. They are as much a part of our cultural heritage here as our industrial past. This month we will put the city on the international cultural map with the opening the Hepworth.

Designed by David Chipperfield, it is the UK's biggest purpose-built gallery for 50 years. The gallery has been more than a decade in the planning and represents a vision conceived in a different era of local government, but one that we have had the drive to follow through, even in these difficult financial times.

When the recession hit in 2008 we were already seeing the structure of the gallery rise from the ground. We were too far advanced then to turn back, even if we had wanted to – and we didn't want to.

I believe that even as we must make huge savings in council budgets we must also invest in the future, pushing the boundaries and not defaulting to the lowest denominator.

What we do today will impact on people both now and in the future. The Hepworth is all about inspiring people, providing something for them to enjoy, to talk about and to come to Wakefield for.

As well as the Hepworth we also have the National Coalmining Museum in the area. Both are part of our culture, both are talking points, both make people think about the past, yet look forward to better things.

And we also have the Yorkshire Sculpture Park here in the district. These are all examples of working together. Culture is part of what we all do – not just what the council does – and we are always looking for new ways of working together through innovative partnerships and trusts to make things happen.

The Hepworth, which itself is soon to become a trust, is an example of effective partnership working – Wakefield Council has had the vision to deliver the gallery and the confidence to underwrite it, working with regional, national and international partners.

Local people have been encouraged to take ownership with exclusive tours and school visits as the building took shape. They are invited to open the Hepworth because we want this to be a people's gallery.

The Hepworth is, of course, an artwork in its own right and like all modern art has provoked lively public discussion. People have been writing to me, to local newspapers, talking in the street about the building design.

Some love its angular shape, some don't – but they do talk about it and that's great. I just love idea of people discussing modern art as they go about their ordinary business.

So far, everyone has an opinion on the outside – let's see what they say when they get inside.

Peter Box is the leader of Wakefield City Council

From where I'm standing

Exhibition Road puts spotlight on Africa

Felicity Heywood

Two recent shows on Exhibition Road focus in very different ways on Africa.

The more scholarly Rediscovering African Geographies uses maps from the Royal Geographical Society's (RGS) collection to present what it says are "new insights into Africa, its people, societies and relationship with the wider world".

But more accurately, this exhibition reveals to a European market what has been known in African academic and African lay historian's circles forever. It repositions Africa by rewriting some of the captions that originally explained the RGS's images of ancient and colonial Africa and its people.

That's not to say there isn't anything for the clued-up African visitor to learn. The RGS is quite adept at packing in vital information in its small temporary exhibition space. The exhibition questions how is it that Africa was the cradle of humanity and human civilisation but Africa's importance to the story of humanity is absent from media reports.

To the V&A, and its new paying exhibition Figures and Fictions: Contemporary South African Photography is in contrast to the RGS exhibition in that the depth comes in the pictures themselves rather than the accompanying miniscule description.

The majority of the 17 photographers (all living and working in South Africa) use devices such as unexpected juxtapositions and blurring cultural and gender boundaries – with some resulting confusion for the viewer. Some of the more striking images are of tweed-clad young men who have just returned from their initiation ceremony, the poor white couple who are cradling a young boy in what looks like a family portrait but a prosthetic leg warrants explanation, and the confidence of the street fashions of the "born free" generation.

The photographs make a statement and some leave a lasting effect. The images are diverse and reveal how different people live their lives above and below the radar.

It's great to see Africa in the spotlight but I wonder how many of the European visitors will be able to or care to answer some of the questions the exhibitions ask.

It's all relative humidity

Maurice Davies raised an interesting topic in his opinion piece Don't touch that thermostat dial (*Museums Journal February 2011, p17*).

He claims that for years we have been told to do all we can to achieve 50% relative humidity but the news is that we can aim for conditions of 40%–60% relative humidity or even wider. He explains that you should use relative humidity to control the moisture content of organic materials such as wood and paper and that temperature is not such a big deal.

He admits that a few jet-set conservators (oh, I can but dream) have known these things for the last few years but the grounded professionals are only just gaining access to it.

I say this is nonsense. This information is and always has been available. Garry Thomson argued in The Museum Environment that conditions for non-national museums and museums in non-purpose built buildings should be between 40% and 70% relative humidity, controlling temperature to control relative humidity.

His book also has a step-by-step explanation of moisture content and has been available since 1978: how many museum or conservation studies training programmes don't have this on their reading list? Is delving into a book too hard?

Back in 1996 I wrote in Museum Practice that "there is no one ideal relative humidity", adding that extremes and sudden fluctuations should be avoided. In 1999 I returned to the theme again in Museum Practice calling for the numbers in BS5454 to be replaced with 'good design' and a stable environment with 'realistic parameters'. I am not the only person that has been raising this kind of point for the last two decades.

The question is why is it still news? I worry people reject science that does not offer soundbites but instead offers a rationale with which people can produce sensible environmental considerations for their collection, building budget and environmental impact.

Yes 'don't touch the dial' but also do go and dust off the science. Searching for simplistic solutions encourages dogma which neither our budgets nor the planet can afford.

Jane Henderson, professional tutor in conservation, Cardiff University

Interns: some get paid

In reference to Lauren Woodard's letter expressing her concerns about internships, the example referring to the National Maritime Museum (NMM) does not in fact support her thesis (*Museums Journal April 2011, p18*).

The metals conservation internship recently offered by the NMM is a paid one-year internship, with a salary of £19,200 as stated in its advertisement and job description. This internship is indeed a positive training opportunity designed to give necessary, practical, hands-on collections conservation experience under the personal tutelage of a senior professional.

This is one of six paid internships in conservation being offered by the NMM from 2010 to 2014, generously funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund's Skills for the Future programme. These paid conservation internships are an excellent example of how heritage funding and skilled experts can work together to ensure sectoral opportunities for those just starting their careers and to ensure that important skills devoted to preserving our heritage transfer from one generation to the next.

Angela Doane, director collections, National Maritime Museum, London

Staff load mail into large cargo nets on the platform at Calais Station, 1935

I agree with most of what Lauren Woodard has to say about internships. I have a friend who applied for a student placement/internship at a national museum. During interview he expressed a desire to learn more about the collections in his lunch breaks. It was explained that this would be frowned upon as what was required was a skivvy to do mundane tasks that were falling behind due to recent redundancies among paid staff.

But I feel that Woodard is off the mark in her implication that people with graduate or post-graduate qualifications should not expect to do internships/voluntary placements. This has always been a fact of life for museum professionals and, although it certainly reduces universal access to the profession as she suggests, it is, in effect, just another part of the pre-entry training process and is probably less of a problem than the high costs of the degree courses in the first place.

ROYAL MAIL GROUP LTD (RMM) 2011

The really important thing is the balance between internships and permanent jobs in the profession. If doing a few months' work placement makes it likely that you will get a paid permanent job at the end of it, that's fine. If vast numbers of interns are being taken on whom employers are well aware stand little chance of securing longterm paid employment, then it is exploitation of the worst kind.

Erik Blakeley, learning projects manager, Tank Museum, Bovington, Dorset

Rock work

I found the article on disposal interesting but was concerned that the tone of the piece seemed to imply that since not much was known about the rock collections they were quickly thrown in the skip, while other objects were researched in depth resulting in new information and new homes (*Museums Journal March 2011, p33*).

While it did sound like the unlabelled student collections were of little use, I can make several suggestions that might prevent this happening to other rock c the future. There are several r groups that can help with ide curating geological specimen Sciences Collections Associat Curators' Group (GCG); and t the Preservation of Natural H Collections (based in the US) forums where queries can be minerals, Mindat.org has a liv board. There are also training The GCG has one this month you've got a geology collectio

Finally to prevent build up labelled student collections, r anyone doing fieldwork is tra specimens properly, and don specimens unless they do.

Helen Kerbey, department of ge Amgueddfa Cymru, National M

Clarification: The Scottish M Museum is in Irvine, not Gla was stated on p56 of Museum April 2010.

Vox pop

Are acquisitions a priority in light of fun

Stephen Deuchar
director, Art Fund

"Collecting doesn't have to be the number one priority at the expense of everything else a museum does. But acquisitions do matter.

I know many museum directors are worried that, as they tighten their belts, significant acquisitions may no longer be possible, and that the continuing development of museums as major cultural centres may be fatally compromised.

Collections lie at the heart of museums, and fresh acquisitions are their very lifeblood. Renewal and development is what keeps them alive and thriving, constantly responding to the appetite of their growing publics. Museums can't stop collecting – it would be like a theatre saying it wasn't going to mount any new productions, or a library saying they weren't going to buy any more books."

Simon Cane *head of museum operations, Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery*

"Most funding for acquisitions is raised from sources that are concerned with supporting acquisitions, so stopping collecting does not necessarily protect jobs and services.

It is essential for collections to develop if they are to reflect society; a closed collection will quickly lose its relevance.

The acquisition of the Staffordshire Hoard by Birmingham and Stoke, and the Art Fund International partnership between Birmingham and Walsall, are two examples where other people's money has been used to acquire exciting new works that will attract new audiences.

We need to be smarter in our choices and more enterprising in our approach but continued acquisitions is the optimistic response to the present climate."

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Museums need to work with
audiences and genuinely understand
their needs if they are to communicate
science effectively, writes Scott Anthony
Brave
new
world

RADIO
HOLD ON
LOCK ON

Today's science, medicine and technology museums are facing a rapidly growing series of technological and social changes.

Ken Arnold and Thomas Söderqvist recently made a lucid appeal for such museums to adopt a Dogme-style "vow of chastity" (*Museums Journal February 2011, p22*). In doing so, they raised a range of issues about how science and its history are displayed. But it is not clear that a "vow of chastity" is the right response for cultural institutions facing new and recognisably 21st-century challenges.

We live in a world where the British Museum recently appointed its first Wikipedian-in-residence, where the Oscar-winning film-maker Kevin MacDonald's new movie, Life in a Day, is constructed entirely from footage donated via YouTube, and where news organisations such as the BBC and the Guardian are moving beyond merely padding out websites with user-generated content to reconfiguring how news is gathered, disseminated and consumed.

How might these new technological developments and the enthusiasm for participation allow museums of science and technology to broaden and deepen their engagement of audiences with history?

Conflicting attitudes towards science have an impact on the public's relationship with museums of science and technology.

"People in this country think science is a bit nerdy and boring and something you do up to GSCEs and no further," says Oliver Green, a research fellow at the London Transport Museum. "So it becomes easy for museums of science to fall into the trap of thinking our main audience is kids, and what kids want is interactives, and what we need is to turn the place into an interactive centre for kids. There are so many missed opportunities."

Jim Bennett, the director of the Museum of the History of Science at Oxford University, says that one of the problems is that visitors tend to believe that a science museum knows better and, as a result, they often think their role in a museum is passive: "They even apologise for not understanding, which is ridiculous," he says. "People don't go into an Egyptian gallery and apologise for not reading hieroglyphics. Visitors actually bring an awful lot of understanding with them but they are not always allowed to realise it because science museums tend to slip into a teacherly role."

'It's easy for museums of science to think that their main audience is kids'

One issue that science museums have had is reconciling the presentation of today's "gee-whizz" cutting-edge developments with their role as custodians of historical collections.

"Scientists understand that science comes out of an immediate and direct engagement with the natural world," says Bennett. "And although scientists know that they have a 'history,' they are uneasy about how that history, in all its totality and strangeness, could have led to where we are now. There's quite a profound epistemological issue at stake in how science museums integrate the past into an explanation of what science is doing now."

There's broad agreement that museums of science and technology need to find compelling ways of linking together the presentation of science's past with present developments and future debates, and that harnessing public enthusiasms might be one way to do this.

Recent audience research carried out by London's Science Museum suggests that visitors are enthusiastic about

London's Science Museum offers many hands-on learning opportunities for its younger visitors

Dandies at the Museum of the History of Science, Oxford, for its Steampunk day

finding out about the history of science even though they are appreciably unsure of what it is.

"It is high time we upped our game in telling the rich and intriguing stories of our historical collections and the contexts from which they come," says Tim Boon, chief curator at the Science Museum. "The key to this is what visitors already carry in their heads. History is a hugely popular leisure pursuit; the job of a science museum is to open up the relations between visitor interests in history in general and the history of science and technology in particular."

Family historians, for example, might find a museum's industrial and scientific objects help them better understand the lives of their ancestors. Indeed, one of the encouraging findings of the Science Museum's research was that visitors saw it as a good place to learn history and an enjoyable supplement to going to historical sites, watching documentaries and reading historical fiction.

"Rather than formulae or complicated technology, I'd like to see museums of science and technology make more use of personal connections," argues Green. "The Imperial War Museum, for example, is as much a museum of social history as a military museum. But there are no museums of science telling the social history of civilian technology as ambitiously as it does."

The Science Museum hosted an international workshop on co-curation and public history last year and has begun a project exploring the use of external groups in the organisation of displays in museum development. But to date, co-curation has been limited, in particular in terms of working with collections. ►

James Watt and Our World is a permanent exhibition at the Science Museum, London, which has a reconstruction of the inventor's workshop

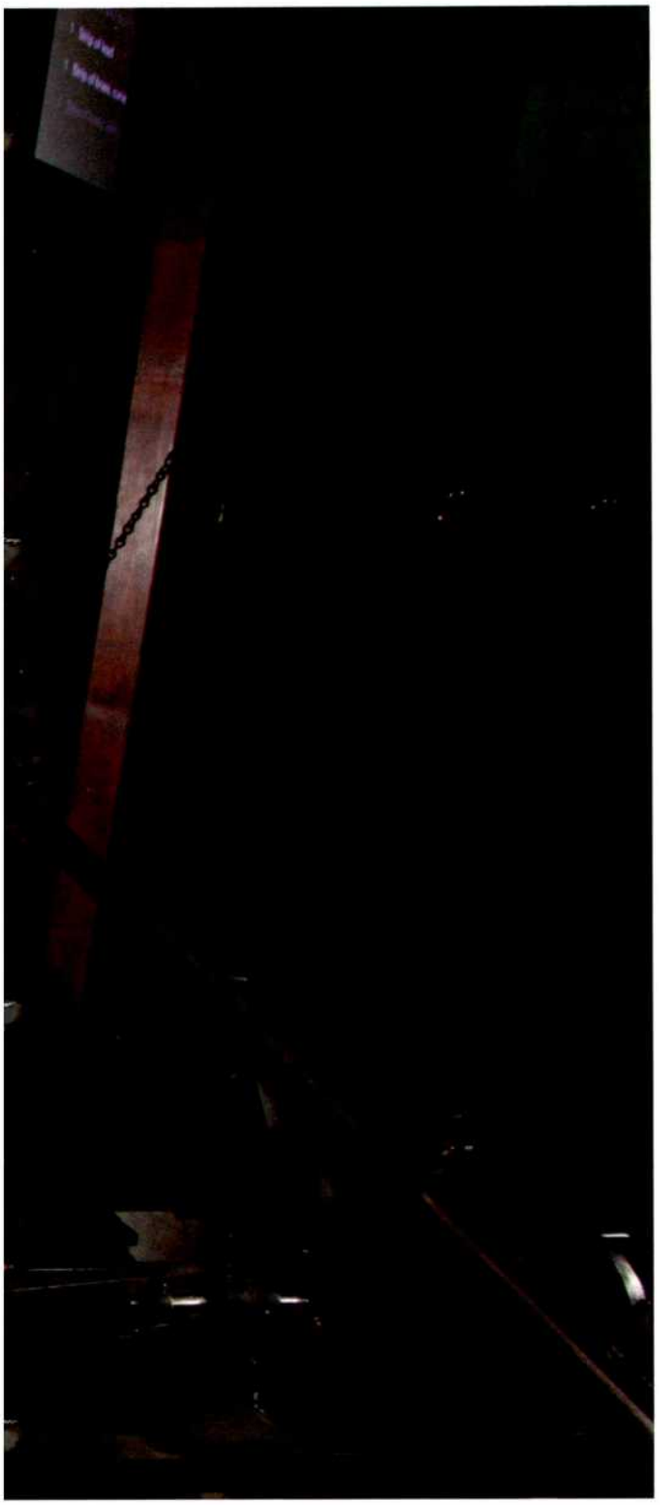
Perhaps some of the most successful co-curation projects have involved artists working with anomalous, unusual or neglected collections.

Manchester Art Gallery invited artists, researchers and school groups to rummage through the Mary Greg collection, an idiosyncratic range of everyday objects mainly from the pre-industrial age. As their Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary blog attests, the experiment not only stimulated a broad spectrum of public activity but also demonstrated how the process of co-curation helped the gallery rethink the uses and importance of the collection.

The Museum of the History of Science in Oxford has already proved that such techniques can be successfully applied to museums of science and technology. Its Steampunk exhibition (13 October 2009-21 February 2010) became the museum's most successful show. It featured sculptures by 18 artists whose work relates to Steampunk, a sub-genre of science fiction that evokes an era where steam power is still widely used, usually Victorian Britain.

"People came out of the exhibition into a gallery of Victorian objects that had a steampunk-like sensibility," says Bennett. "What was interesting is that visitors took the sensibility of the art show with them into the gallery. They treated the objects with a kind of visual respect that they would not have done if they had just walked into a gallery of Victorian objects."

The Steampunk exhibition was engaged with the visual aesthetic of Victorian science rather than the science itself, but Bennett is unrepentant. "The benefit of co-curation was that it introduced us to a world that we had no idea that



Museum in the mix

Staff at the Science Museum have been using a range of co-curation techniques to learn more about how different people understand the history of science and technology.

The museum's latest project is OraMix, which has been using theatre, music and sound to explore young adults' responses to the Science Museum's collection. This has involved participants in the National Youth Theatre's (NYT) Playing Up2 course, and students from City University's BA in Creative Industries, visiting the museum over a two-month period. The aim was to attract more young adults, as this age group often stops visiting museums once they leave school.

The participants were asked to make the museum's collection more attractive and relevant to their peers. As part of this, they talked to curators, scientists and other museum professionals. They also looked at attitudes to science and museums among their own age group.

"The young people that the participants spoke to often saw museums as quite rigid institutions and thought that museums were to do with school," says Holly Jones, who developed the OraMix project with the Science Museum alongside Nicola Jennings, a colleague at Together Productions. The participants found that young adults were interested in events at museums and wanted to get marketing information via online networks such as Facebook.

Activity at the museum centred on the Oramics machine, invented in the late 1960s by Daphne Oram, the electronic music composer who co-founded the BBC Radiophonic Workshop in 1958. The museum recently acquired the machine with the help of Goldsmiths College.

OraMix culminated in site-specific performances held at the museum in late March and early April.

OraMix is part of the Science Museum's plan to see how it can develop co-curation and attract more young adults

existed. It made us look at our collections in a new way. You have to be open-minded to recognise the value of that."

Nina Simon, author of The Participatory Museum, has argued that co-curation can only work if a museum takes the contribution of participants seriously. The starting place needs to be: "In what ways could our museum benefit from the contributions of the public?"

Curators can be understandably resistant to the idea of ceding authority but, as Simon makes clear, successful co-curation demands the fuller input of curators rather than the abdication of responsibility. No one else is as well placed to creatively manage the scope of the public's input. But co-curation is a time-consuming process and one fraught with creative, organisational and logistical difficulties.

Museums of science and technology inhabit a world of maturing technologies and evolving audience expectations, which has consequences for how they narrate history. How to apply the lessons of this brave new world to the material strengths of a museum is a daunting task.

"We will grasp what we need to do when we understand better how people apply their existing experience when they encounter museum displays," says Boon. "Co-curation of many kinds is currently the best route to that enhanced understanding."

Scott Anthony is a freelance journalist

There will be a session exploring science displays at the Museums Association conference (3-4 October, Brighton) www.museumsassociation.org/conference

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For their contribution to the Campaign! Make an Impact project, pupils in Kirklees joined the Red Hand campaign against the use of child soldiers

Taking a stand

Museums have traditionally presented themselves as neutral spaces, but some are breaking out to campaign against social injustice, as *Felicity Heywood* finds out

The traditional view of a museum is that it is a neutral space striving for objectivity in its interpretation of its collections. But attitudes are slowly changing, and doors are opening to new practices, with museums more willing to show where they stand on issues that affect society.

"We have invented this myth that the public sees us as neutral and safe to prevent us getting into controversy," says David Fleming, the director of National Museums Liverpool (NML).

At NML's core, says Fleming, is its role as a socially responsible group of museums. And this means having an opinion on social injustices that affect the community as well as campaigning on human rights issues.

To this end, NML has set up an international network of museums concerned with having a voice in addressing human rights abuses. The Federation of International Human Rights Museums (FIHRM) had its inaugural conference last autumn in Liverpool.

Museums are not only concerned with their own voice on social issues, but also encourage the public to take action. However, Richard Sandell, the head of the school of museums studies at University of Leicester, points out that although museums are increasingly progressive places, there is still anxiety about taking a particular standpoint. He says campaigning or activism can be a museum being explicit about where it stands on an issue, but it can also be a more subtle embrace of a cause by showing that, for instance, human rights underpin everything the museum does.

Birthe Müller was the director of Red Cross Sweden's House of Humanity centre in Malmö, which was closed last year because of funding cuts. For her, campaigning means "participating in the dialogue of society". She sees museums as particularly relevant to this because they can use their connections with the past to highlight contemporary events.

Müller gives the example of the House of Humanity project looking at the white bus operation, a humanitarian mission led by the Swedish Red Cross to Germany in 1945. Along with the Danish government, the mission used white buses with a red-cross emblem to rescue thousands of former concentration camp inmates.

One of the white buses became part of the centre's collection, and visitors, while sitting in the bus, learned about its history and were then asked what they have done to show their courage and responsibility. The House of Humanity ▶

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Hull pupils debating in a local courtroom as part of Hull Museums' participation in the Campaign! Make an Impact project

also used an exhibition about contemporary immigration to look at how Swedish refugees were fleeing to the US because of famine 150 years ago.

Müller says: "If you know what happened 150 years ago, it's not difficult to understand why there are refugees in the world today."

All campaigns, says Müller, should follow three steps. First, they should be based on fact; second, they should show their relevance to what is happening in society today; third, and most importantly, they should empower people to make a change. "Most museums I visit do the first two very well," she says.

A two-year project led by the British Library, London, and the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, and involving 60 museums and archives across England, fulfilled the latter part of Müller's campaign model. Campaign! Make an Impact, which ended in March, was created thought the Strategic Commissioning programme, which is funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Department for Education.

The aim was to inspire young people into active citizenship, and involved museums and archives partnering local schools. The project involved the participants examining historical campaigning material linked to the collections of the museum or archive; choosing a theme to campaign on that was linked to something in their community that impassioned them; and finally focusing on developing their own "creative campaign" around a particular theme.

Jane Avison, the head of learning at Hull Museums and one of the architects of the national project, says the term "creative element" was used to show young people that campaigning doesn't have to be negative and violent to get a message across. Instead, the young people were encouraged to use poetry, film and other art forms.

This approach shows that museums are anxious about being seen as supporting some forms of protest. "We wouldn't want the museum to be seen to be encouraging rioting in the streets," Avison says. "Writing a poem and sending it to the council leader is a better way of being heard."

Hull Museums used its collections to look at campaigns against child labour. The project involved 13-14 year-old pupils from Endeavour High School taking part in mock trials in a Victorian courtroom. This helped them to investigate the social conditions of the time.

> 'We wouldn't want the museum to be seen to be encouraging rioting in the streets'

The pupils then chose to campaign on restorative practice as a way to prevent conflict. Within the school there are problems of violence and discrimination, says Avison, which is also reflected in the wider community.

All the Endeavour pupils involved in the project were trained in "restorative circle" methods where discussion is used to diffuse situations, and listening skills are employed to understand diverse viewpoints. Problems at the school have significantly decreased, according to Avison.

The pupils wanted to spread the message to the whole city and created two films and a photographic exhibition that were shown around Hull. The young people also demonstrated the restorative circle practice to the audiences.

Avison says literacy levels have increased as a result of the project, the young people have shown increased confidence and many want to pursue GCSE history.

"The project has proved it can raise aspirations and give a voice to young people," Avison says. The model has now been embedded in ▶

Community action: there's no point sitting around moaning

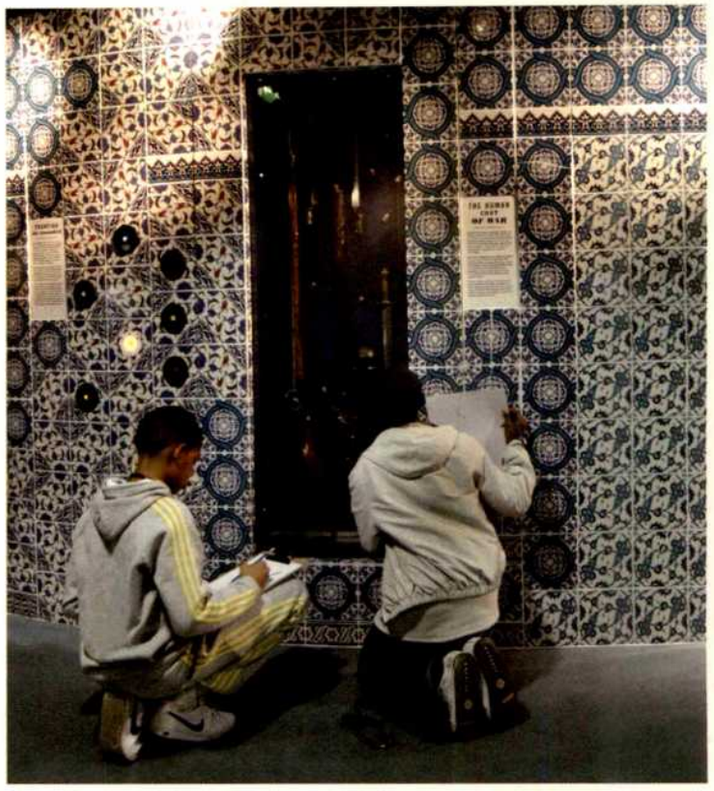
The Florence Nightingale Museum in London supported 150 young people (12-13 year olds) from a local secondary school from September 2009 to summer 2010 to find their campaigning voice as part of the British Library and Museums, Libraries and Archives Council's Campaign! Make an Impact programme.

Using its collection of Florence Nightingale-led campaigns on health reform, the museum encouraged the pupils to make comparisons with modern-day campaigns, investigate the role of the media in influencing and guiding public opinion and to look at the importance of holding those in power to account.

The pupils were given freedom to choose what campaign they would lead on. They chose to campaign on the right to vote at 16 years old.

Katie Edwards, the learning and access manager at the museum, says: "Initially, the young people had the view of 'Who's going to listen to us?'"

But the pupils were empowered through fundraising, writing a song, making a film, making T-shirts and posters, and liaising with the media. Edwards says this had an impact "on their confidence and belief that their ideas are important – that they have a role to play in their community".



One young person who took part in the Florence Nightingale Museum project was impressed. "It's important, isn't it, to take action in our community?" she says. "There is no point sitting around moaning unless I am prepared to get involved in my community."

The Florence Nightingale Museum and 20 of the participants have since set up a youth forum that meets quarterly and helps the museum devise campaigns for young people.

www.bl.uk/campaign
www.florence-nightingale.co.uk

At London's Florence Nightingale Museum, 12-13 year olds concentrated on the right to vote as part of their Campaign! project

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Above: The International Slavery Museum in Liverpool has campaigned against modern forms of slavery.
Below: Kirklees pupils in campaigning mode

Hull's core work and it is being marketed as a new buy-in service to schools.

Most museums and galleries use the content of their collections to guide the type of campaigns that they develop. But in some places, people's needs have taken precedence over the museum's objects.

In the south-east African country of Malawi, the group of five nationally-funded museums tackle problems such as HIV/Aids and poverty because staff feel it is the right thing to do. Michael Gondwe, the curator-education coordinator at the Museums of Malawi, told Museums Journal: "You can't turn a blind eye to what is happening at the very basic level."

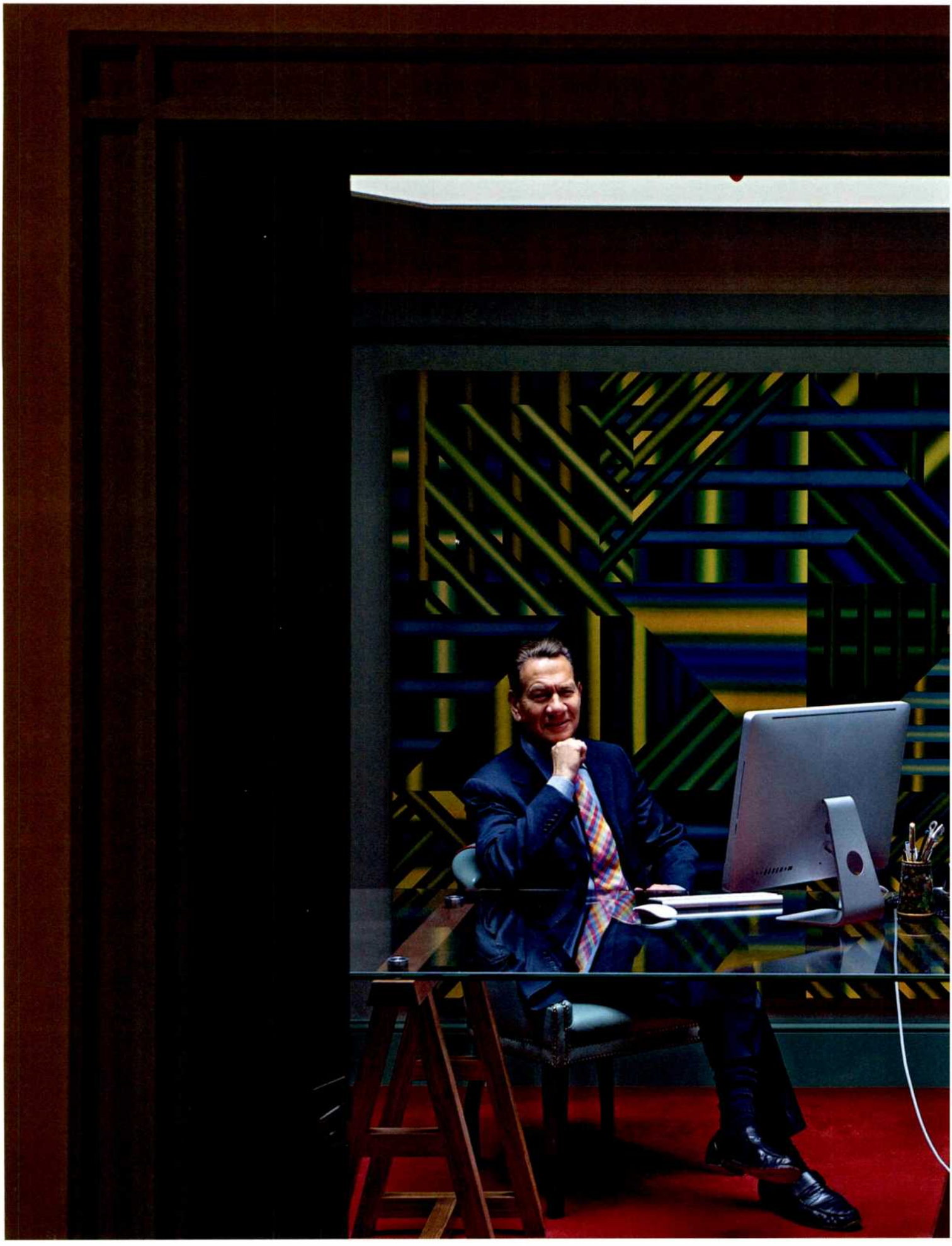
Instead of using its collections, which comprise natural history and archaeology, the museum addresses local cultural practices that affect the health of the community. Workshops are held with school pupils and their parents to highlight how cultural practices such as circumcision or polygamy can lead to infection. Programmes are run on how weaving and pottery can help combat poverty.

Whether museums accept a role of social responsibility or attempt to be neutral, they will have to engage with society if they want to remain relevant. NML's Fleming believes that engaging with non-governmental organisations is a powerful way of getting a message across and also gives visitors a means to take action.

Survival International campaigns on behalf of some of the world's indigenous peoples. Its advocacy director, Jonathan Mazower, told Museums Journal: "A museum that fails to reflect the society in which it is immersed is not only irresponsible but ends up giving a misleading impression."

Mazower goes further: "If a museum exhibition has done its job properly, I would hope people could learn that the people behind the artefacts are in need of help. Then I think most people would want to help."

Felicity Heywood is a social and cultural journalist



Judgement day

This year's Art Fund Prize judging panel is chaired by Michael Portillo, the broadcaster and former Conservative MP. *Simon Stephens* meets him. Photograph by *Phil Sayer*

Michael Portillo at a glance

Michael Portillo was born in 1953. He joined the Conservative Research Department in 1976. He was responsible for briefing Margaret Thatcher before her press conferences at the 1979 general election.

After working in the oil industry, in 1984 he won a by-election in Enfield Southgate and represented the seat for 13 years until defeat in 1997. He held various government roles, including defence secretary.

After 1997, he returned to the oil industry as an adviser and also worked as a broadcaster and writer.

He was re-elected to parliament in 1999 and unsuccessfully contested the leadership of the party in 2001. He left the House of Commons in 2005 and has since continued to work as broadcaster and writer.

It must be an extremely tense time for the 10 museums and galleries on the longlist for this year's Art Fund Prize, particularly when the chairman of the judges' panel is one of those people who finds mistakes on captions.

"I was going round one museum recently and I spotted that one of the captions on an exhibit was wrong and I went and told the director," says broadcaster and former Conservative party cabinet minister Michael Portillo. "I'll keep the identity of the museum under my hat, but it was a subject in which I had a certain specialist knowledge and I knew it was wrong."

Portillo follows television and radio presenter Kirsty Young, who chaired last year's Art Fund Prize, which was won by Belfast's Ulster Museum. The longlist for this year's £100,000 prize, which will be cut down to a four-strong shortlist on 19 May, has thrown up the usual mix of museums and locations, ranging from the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum in Ayrshire to the Mostyn gallery in north Wales. There are three London venues: Leighton House; the Victoria and Albert Museum's (V&A) Ceramics Gallery; and the British Museum. The other five are Hertford Museum; the People's History Museum, Manchester; the Polar Museum, University of Cambridge; the Roman Baths Museum, Bath; and the Yorkshire Museum in York.

"At one point we said we were judging apples and pears and someone said, 'No, it's apples and aardvarks'," says Portillo. "They are very, very different entities."

But Portillo feels that it's right for the prize to contain a wide range of museums and galleries: "We are not just awarding a prize, we are also drawing attention to what is going on in museums. So I think it is reasonable for us to have a range of size and sort of museum, including galleries, and to have a regional range as well."

Portillo is aware that it's not the easiest prize to judge because of this, and it was particularly difficult in the ▶

early stages when the 37 submissions had to be cut down to the longlist of 10. This was a paper exercise with each judge emailing their top 10 and then they all met up to discuss their choices and finalise the longlist.

"From the 10 emails that came in there was already a fair amount of consensus," Portillo says. "And in discussion, it was quite interesting, as views changed quite a lot, so it was clear that people were willing to listen to each other and take into account different points of view.

"But I think we all feel on much securer ground now we are actually going around each place," he adds.

So what are they actually judging? Portillo points to innovation, although he says this can come in many forms. He says they are also looking for how museums connect with audiences and make their collections accessible.

"Of course, we are all struck by new buildings but we have to remind ourselves we are absolutely not an architecture prize," Portillo adds.

'I don't believe trying to reach a wide audience is an excuse for dumbing down'

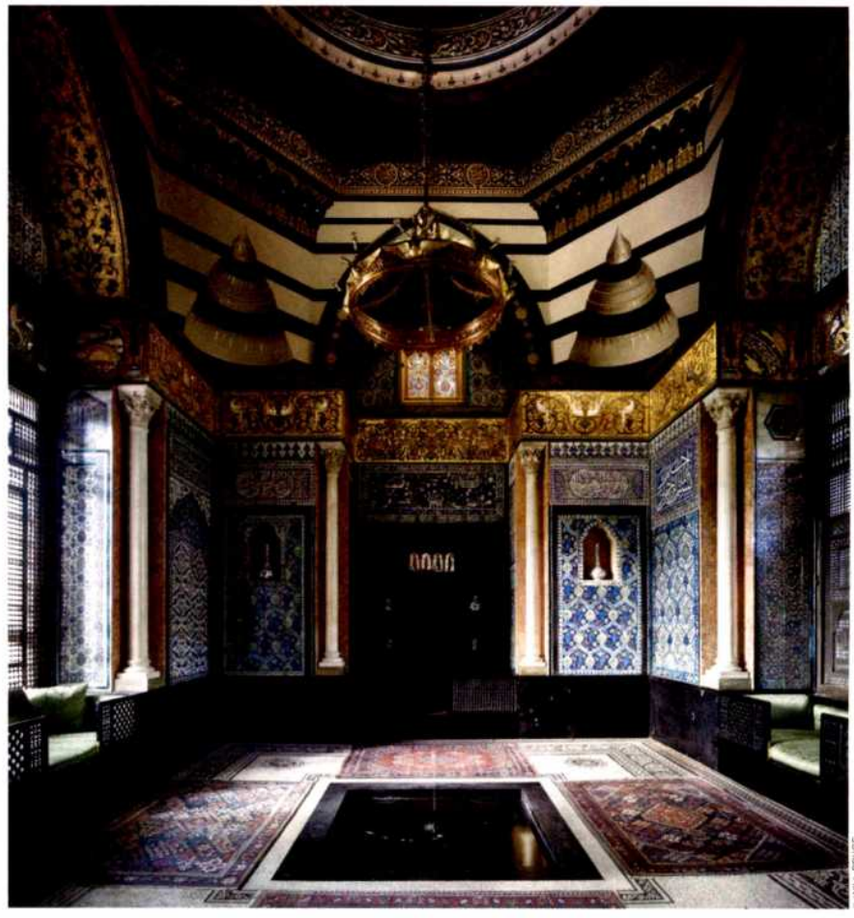
With such a wide range of museums and galleries on the longlist, it's probably a good thing that Portillo's fellow judges are a mixed bunch. They range from the scientist Jim Al-Khalili to Turner Prize-winning artist Jeremy Deller, through to museum consultant Kathy Gee, cultural studies professor Lola Young, curator and Antiques Roadshow presenter Lars Tharp and Guardian arts writer Charlotte Higgins.

"We have two judges, Kathy and Lars, who were on the judging panel last year," says Portillo. "That is the policy, to have some experienced judges, and it's also reassuring that people want to be judges for a second time – they don't feel the experience was so grisly they won't touch it again."

Portillo says the judges have been travelling in groups of four or five to visit the museums and "quite a camaraderie is building up", although some are visiting certain venues on their own.

Higgins says people have been falling into certain roles, with her and Deller playing the naughty ones sitting on the back row, while Tharp has been the group's "wit and raconteur" and Portillo is the "headmaster".

Perhaps a headmasterly tone is the right one for a chairman of judges, but what else does Portillo bring to the role? Well, he has experience of judging major book prizes: the Samuel Johnson Prize for Non-Fiction in 2003 and the 2008 Man Booker Prize for Fiction, when he was the chairman of the judges.



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Leighton House, London, one of the ten nominees for this year's Art Fund Prize, is in Michael Portillo's former constituency of Kensington and Chelsea

"The Man Booker is unbelievably time-consuming," says Portillo. "You read more than 100 books in a six-month period. Then you read the longlist for a second time and the shortlist a third time. It's pretty intense and solitary."

The Art Fund Prize is very different, as Portillo is out with the other judges meeting staff and visitors. He also has a keen interest in how the past is interpreted, as he studied history at university and has continued this interest as a writer and broadcaster. Also, his maternal grand-

The other Art Fund Prize judges at a glance

Jim Al-Khalili is a scientist, author and broadcaster. He is an academic nuclear physicist based at the University of Surrey. He is vice president and trustee of the British Science Association. He has written a number of popular science books and also presented on radio and TV.

Jeremy Deller is a British artist whose work combines performance, video, sound, ephemera and photographs. Born in 1966 in London, Deller studied art history at the Courtauld Institute of Art. He won the Turner Prize in 2004 and was appointed a Tate trustee in 2007.

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Kathy Gee is a museum consultant and director of Volition Associates, which works in the cultural sector to enable strategic development. She became CEO of the West Midlands Regional Museums Council in 1990 and then MLA West Midlands until 2006. She was a judge in 2010.

Charlotte Higgins is the chief arts writer for the Guardian newspaper. A classicist by education, she is the author of two books on the ancient world: Latin Love Lessons and It's All Greek To Me. Higgins is working on a book about Roman Britain, to be published by Jonathan Cape.

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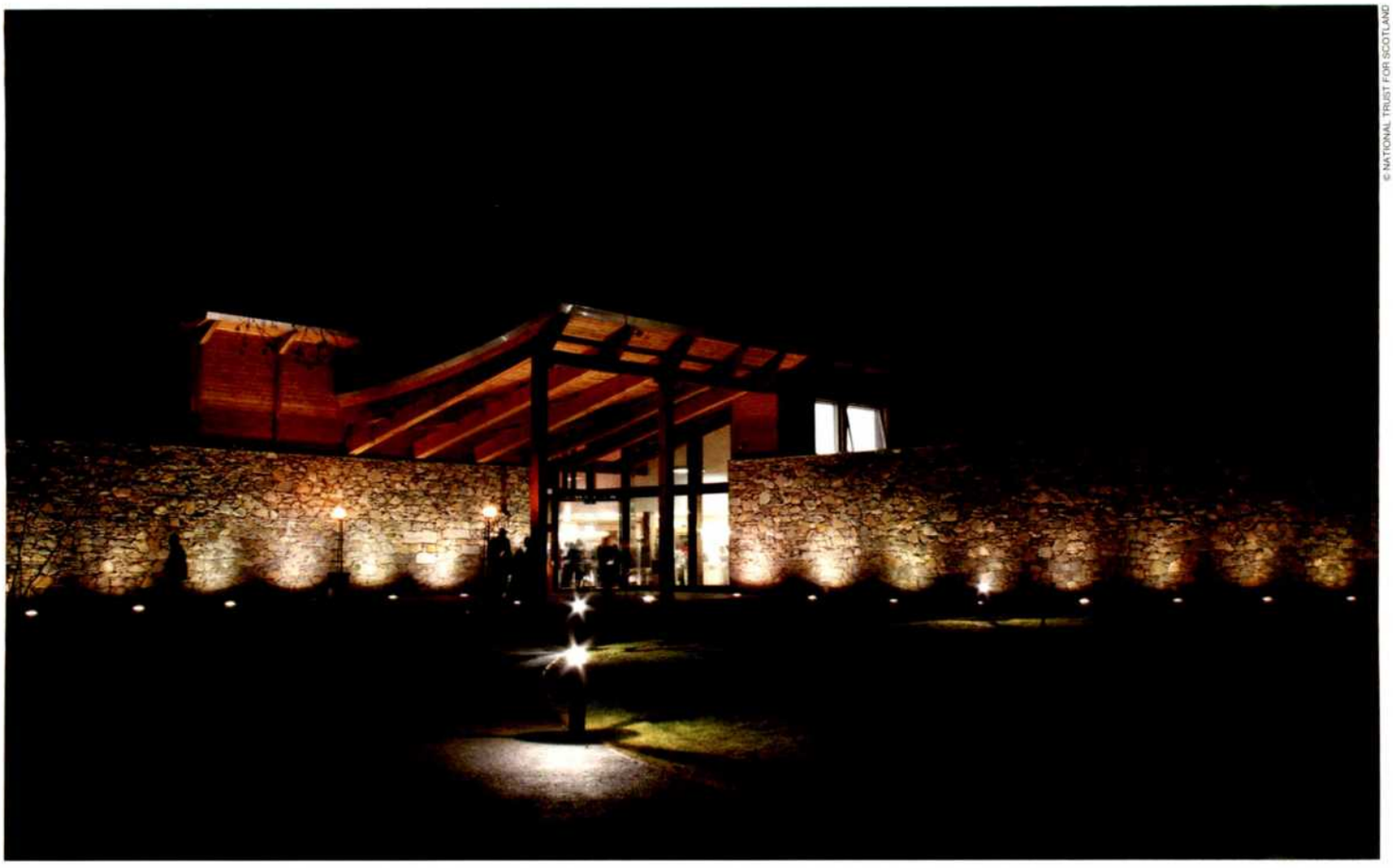

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The Robert Burns Birthplace Museum, Ayrshire, is on the Art Fund Prize longlist

father was an art collector and part of his collection was housed in the Kirkcaldy Museum and Art Gallery in Fife.

Since leaving the House of Commons in 2005, Portillo has spent much of his time making television programmes. These have included a documentary on the unburied bodies from the Spanish civil war (Portillo's father, Luis, came to Britain as a refugee at the end of the war) and, more recently, the Great British Railway Journeys series.

He does see parallels between television and museums: "I think they are very much part of the same thing in as much as what museums try to do is make knowledge accessible and that is what television is trying to do.

"I think the danger that is faced by museums and by television is the same, and that is dumbing down," he continues. "And I don't believe that the fact that you are trying to reach a wide audience is an excuse for dumbing down." But Portillo says he and his fellow judges have been impressed by the level of curatorial expertise they have seen on their visits: "We are dealing with people who really know their subject, love the objects they have and want to bring them to a wider public."

Have any of the curatorial experts he has met bent his ear about the damage that government cuts are doing to the sector?

"Nobody has whined to us at all, everything has been pretty upbeat," he says. "We have been pretty struck by the realism of museums, the determination, even their cheerfulness. I think by now they have had quite a lot of time to get used to the idea that the funding picture is going to be different. I think some of them think they have had seven years of plenty, and there are seven different years ahead, to use the biblical analogy."

So, are there any hints as to which museums and galleries will make it on the shortlist of four? While Portillo makes it clear that, "for the purpose of the prize, I am not attached to any of them", he has links with some of the museums. Leighton House and the V&A were in his constituency when he was the MP for Kensington and Chelsea from 1999 to 2005. The People's History Museum might also appeal, considering his career in politics.

And is Portillo getting any hints from the other judges about who they might go for? "They are being quite restrained. We go round and 'ooh' and 'aah' because we are impressed by what we see, but I have not heard a single judge say to another: 'This one will definitely be on my shortlist.' They are playing their cards fairly close."

The winner of the Art Fund Prize 2011 will be announced on 15 June. www.artfundprize.org.uk

Lola Young is a former academic and a writer, public speaker and broadcaster. She has sat on the boards of several national cultural organisations, including the Southbank Centre and the Royal National Theatre. She is an Independent Crossbench peer.

Ceramics historian Lars Tharp is a lecturer, writer, curator and art consultant. He is the Hogarth curator and ambassador of London's Foundling Museum. He has been a member of the BBC's Antiques Roadshow team since 1986 and was a judge of the 2010 Art Fund Prize.

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The Museum of... Our pick of the UK's specialist collections

Cheshire's Englesea Brook Chapel & Museum celebrates a vibrant religious and social movement, says *Louise Gray*

Where "South Cheshire, in a hamlet in the middle of nowhere," says project director Stephen Hatcher. "But we are in easy reach of Crewe and the M6 motorway."

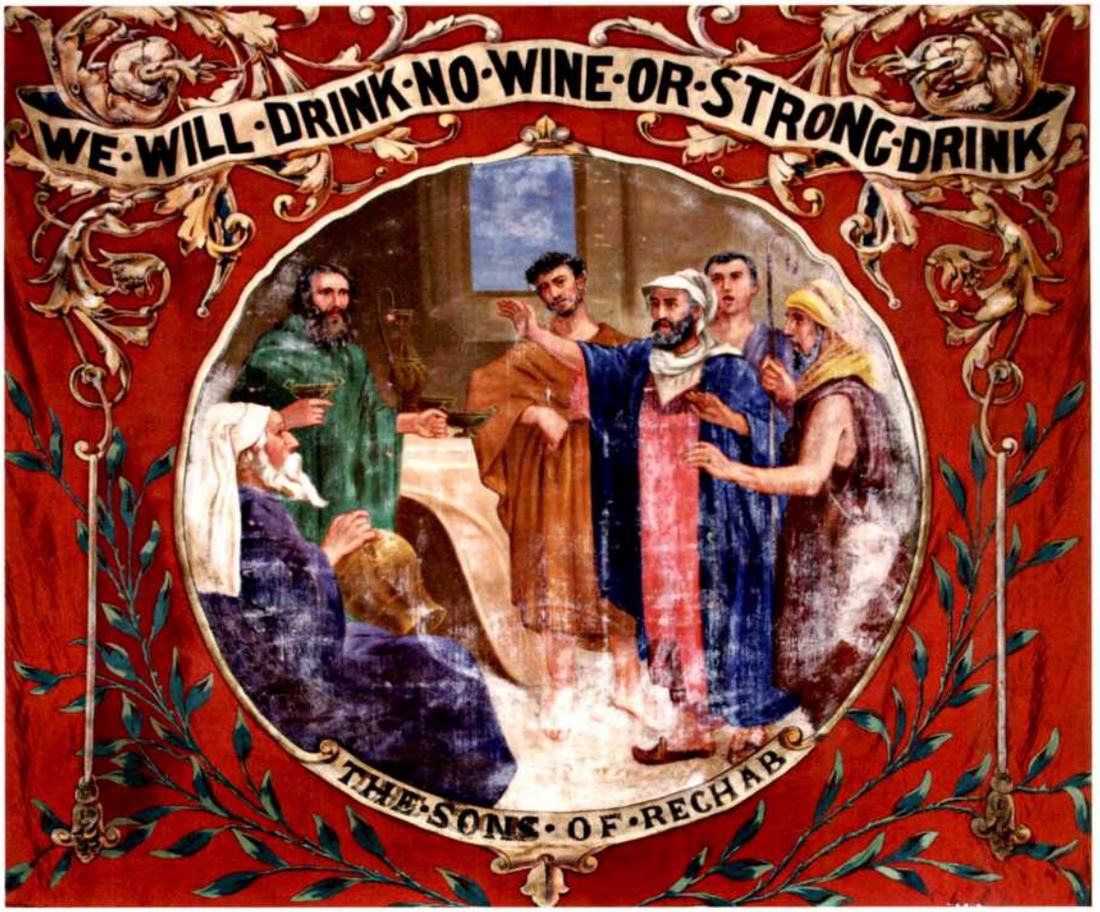
What Englesea Brook Chapel & Museum regards itself as a heritage and outreach project focusing on the primitive methodists, the second-largest branch of Methodism after the Wesleyans. "Primitive Methodism was amazingly successful as a working-class movement and religion," Hatcher says. It is housed in an 1828 chapel, which still holds services on a monthly basis and for major Christian festivals.

Opened 1987.

Collection Primitive Methodism sprang from a day of prayer at Mow Cop, Staffordshire, in 1807; for many years its preaching was done in cottages and other ad hoc venues. The museum holds a substantial library with many of the movement's early tracts. The cowshed printing press on which Hugh Bourne, one of Primitive Methodism's pivotal figures, published these leaflets, is also part of the collection. "There's a very good collection of historic banners, which are not exclusively religious," says Hatcher. "People can also see the first pulpit made from a chest of drawers, with a crude adaptation to put a Bible on."

Highlights "There is a child's grave in the floor of the chapel. This is unusual in a non-conformist building, but in 1841, the chapel had no burial land," says Hatcher. "The interment helped save the chapel from cottage conversation in 1983."

Help at hand A full-time project director and a part-time administrator/education worker.



Above: Englesea Brook Chapel & Museum, Cheshire, holds an important collection of banners. Below: the museum is housed in a 19th-century chapel

There are 20 regular volunteers.

Budget £80,000 a year. The museum receives some income from the Methodist church. Grants from the local authority, the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, and various covenants have also been part of its income stream. The museum prides itself on its annual book sales, which can raise £10,000 a year. Admission is free, as are tea and biscuits to visitors.

Sticky moment "The Queen was going to come for the 200th anniversary of the Mow Cop meeting, but the Duke of Edinburgh wasn't well, so we got the Princess Royal instead," Hatcher says.

Survival tip "Running a museum is hard work," Hatcher says. "People fool themselves if they think bright ideas alone will work."

Visitors 10,000 came to the site itself in 2010. Many more encounter the museum via its educational work covering local history and religious themes in their historical contexts. It works with about 60 schools a term.

Future plans The museum also owns two cottages in Englesea Brook, one of which houses its library and to which disabled access is being added.

www.engleseabrook-museum.org.uk

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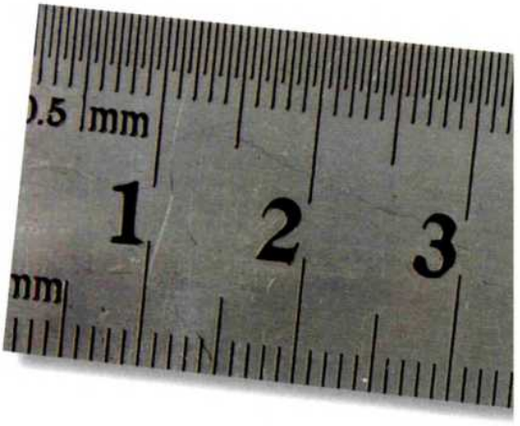

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Melton Carnegie Museum, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, p46

Reviews

'The question of development in the country is debated, challenging visitors to look past the traditional image of rural life and see it more as a continuing process of change' *Tim Bryan* on the Melton Carnegie Museum, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire

Atmosphere: Exploring Climate Science, Science Museum, London, p42

Egypt Gallery, Ipswich Museum, Suffolk, p48

© SCIENCE MUSEUM, LONDON (ATMOSPHERE)

Atmosphere: Exploring Climate Science, Science Museum, London

The Science Museum's climate science gallery has plenty of atmosphere, but *Ellen McAdam* left feeling unsatisfied

The Science Museum's new Atmosphere gallery advertises itself as a fresh and exciting way to explore climate science. Billed as an interactive and immersive experience, it offers visitors the chance to step into a self-contained world with its own land, oceans and icecaps. In this brave new Earth, visitors are invited to explore the science of our changing climate.

The gallery is organised in five zones: the climate system – how the climate works and what causes it to change; earth's energy balance – how greenhouse gases work and why they really matter; the carbon cycle – carbon's global pathways and how we're causing them to change; what might happen – science can track what's already happening and help us imagine the future; and our future choices – science and technology are already helping... what are our options for tomorrow?

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Above: satellites such as this polar orbiter made by the European Space Agency provide data about the Earth's atmosphere.
Below left: Riversimple's hydrogen-powered car features as an example of green technology.
Right: blue lights and high-end interactives permeate the gallery

The displays combine interactives, objects from the Science Museum's collections, and international loans, with content developed through extensive research and engagement with scientists and experts, including the Met Office. The museum plans a wider three-year programme of events, exhibitions and installations on the changing climate.

The gallery has been beautifully designed and lit, creating a soothing blue subaqueous environment in which visitors swim in and out of pools of light like languid fish. Above their heads, the atmosphere twinkles and flows.

No expense has been spared on the interactives, which include computer games, manual interactives, e-labels and other state-of-the-art aids to communication. They explain various aspects of climate change and how science and technology can combat it. The benign design includes frequent benches, onto which this reviewer sank gratefully, if not gracefully, at regular intervals. ▶

climate
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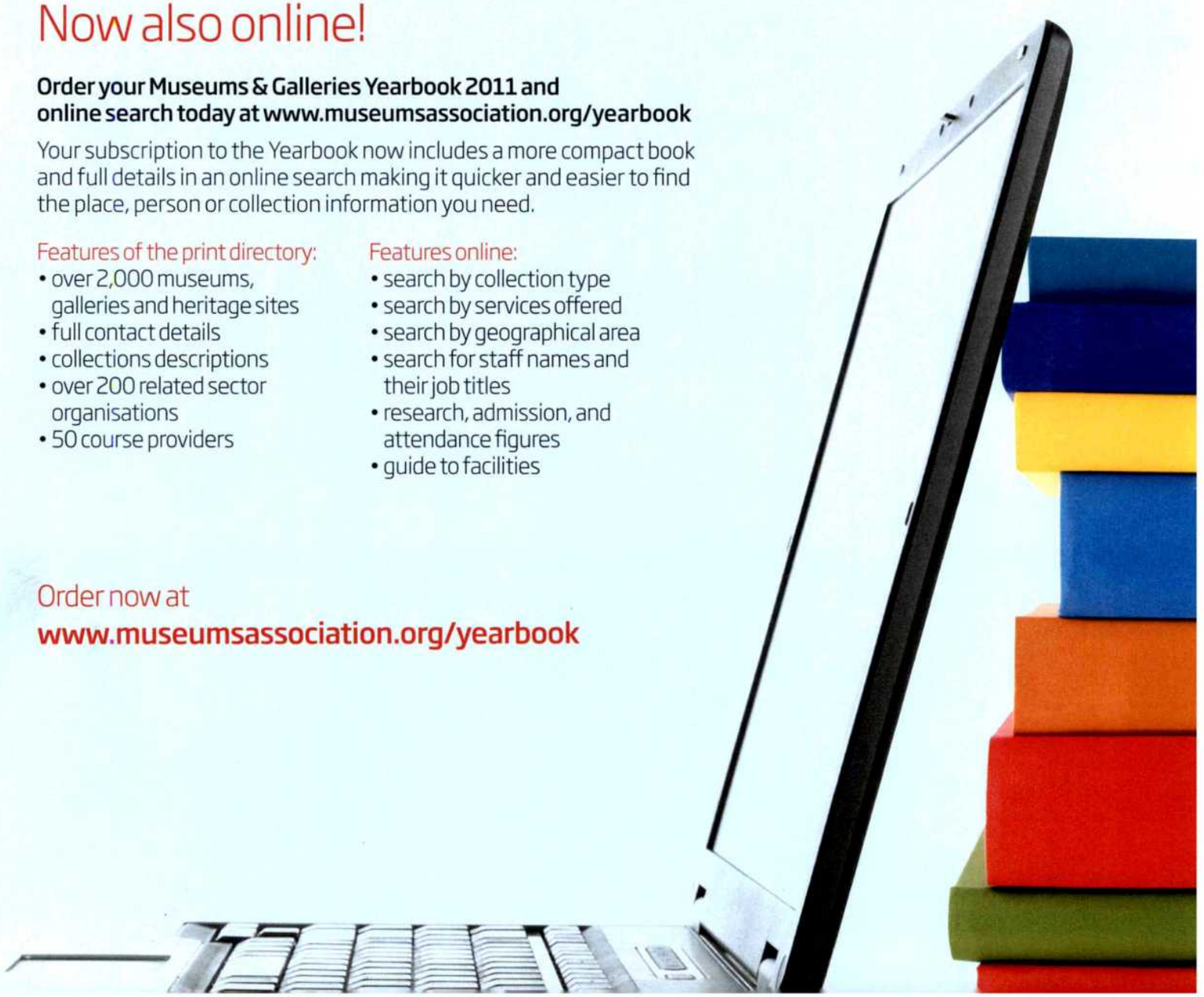

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I found it hard to identify the target audience for this gallery. The museum's website says the gallery is suitable for educational visits by 11-16-year-olds and above. On the afternoon I visited, most of the visitors seemed to be 20- to 30-somethings, although it was hard to tell in the crepuscular gloom – the term "immersive" is now apparently synonymous with "dimly-lit".

The games I tried, such as the one offering the chance to combat rising sea level in different parts of the world, seemed to be aimed at a much younger audience, uncontaminated by computer games such as Assassin's Creed. Conversely, other parts of the display assumed a high level of prior knowledge. The captions tended to be very long, detailed, and rather earnest in tone. Some interactives felt like lectures by another name.

Perhaps because of the gloom, I failed to notice the signage identifying the five zones until I was leaving, having mistaken the circular labels for amusingly quirky outgrowths of the display system. I was therefore uncertain how to navigate the space.

The scholarship underlying the gallery is unmistakable, but as a layperson I struggled to piece together a narrative that would explain how the climate works, how we have changed it, or how our knowledge of climate change has developed.

The most engaging parts of the display were the areas that used real collection items. These brought the scientists and others involved in early exploration to life, informing the visitors, among other things, that the early thrill of seabed exploration soon wore off, to be replaced by numbing boredom. Just like the rest of life, then.

I also enjoyed the House of Cards by the witty David Shrigley. Apart from these areas, however, the gallery was curiously impersonal.

I have been interested in environmental issues and climate change for more than 40 years – so long, in fact, that I can remember when the great fear was not global warming but a new ice age. I approached Atmosphere with an appetite for learning, but left feeling unsatisfied. I did learn something, although it felt like hard work.

As I left the Science Museum I passed such treasures as a silver-plated model of the Forth Rail Bridge and Stephenson's Rocket. With a more traditional curatorial deployment of the museum's fabulous collections, and a lighter touch with the design and technology, what a memorable experience Atmosphere could have been.

Ellen McAdam is head of museums at Glasgow Life

Project data

Cost undisclosed
Main funders Garfield Weston Foundation, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Patrons of the Science Museum
Sponsors Shell, Siemens
Exhibition design Casson Mann
Graphic design Nick Bell Design
Interactive exhibit strategy AllofUs
Interactives ICO Design
Lighting design DHA Design

Above: the Atmosphere gallery provides lots of hands-on opportunities.
Left: probes such as this radiosonde collect information used by climate-change scientists

Melton Carnegie Museum, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire

The curators at Melton Carnegie Museum have created thought-provoking local history displays that don't just look to the past, says *Tim Bryan*

A local tourist guidebook describes Melton Mowbray as "a quintessential English market town" built on the traditions of farming and foxhunting, and famous for its pork pies and Stilton cheese. There has been a market there for more than 1,000 years, providing a rich source of material for its local museum, which recently unveiled a £1.1m revamp.

The history of Melton Mowbray is well told in its displays, but where it really succeeds is in demonstrating the continuing history of the town. Although much has changed in rural Britain, towns such as Melton Mowbray remain important focal points for rural communities to shop, socialise and do business. The new exhibitions at Melton Carnegie Museum cleverly balance a celebration of what has gone before with a challenge to visitors to think about the issues facing the countryside today and tomorrow.

The importance of Melton Mowbray as a market town is emphasised at the start of the exhibitions. By way of introduction, some of its principal trades that are described, including a reconstructed chemist's shop, Stilton cheese workshop and a butcher's shop display highlighting the town's famous pork pies. Pies were made initially as a by-product of cheese-making and were popular with huntsmen. The recurring foxhunting theme is reinforced with material about the town's boot- and saddle-making trades.

At the heart of the museum is its new Town and Rural Life gallery. The exhibition gives visitors the opportunity to see how life in the countryside has changed, but also to contemplate some of the challenges still facing rural people. Its thematic approach divides the story into five areas, each offering a combination of objects, images and artwork, sound and graphics. There is also a study area that has internet access and a small library of books on local topics.

Each thematic display offers visitors access to relevant parts of the museum's core collection in addition to chronological displays elsewhere. For example, natural history material is featured in an area asking visitors whether the countryside is a "Place to Protect", with a quote from broadcaster David Attenborough about the value of the natural world featured on a panel.

Much use is made of digital picture frames showing historic and modern images in each section along with thought-provoking "Stop Press" panels. These provide contemporary quotes from local and national media on relevant topics. In the "Place to Protect" section, an extract from the Independent newspaper reports on government plans to cut funding to wildlife charities. Elsewhere in the exhibition, material from the Leicester Mercury covers the hunting ban.

In an attempt to tackle the thorny topic of "belonging", the museum has used the example of the decline of the traditional village pub as an illustration of just how much life in the country has changed. Audio samples provide the voices of local people and among the pub signs and pictures, visitors can have a game of dominoes while sitting at a pub table in the gallery.

Close by, the question of development in the country

Above: an interactive phone asks visitors for their views. Left: Melton Carnegie Museum tackles the town's history – social, political and culinary – with an imaginative flair

Project data

Cost £1.1m
Main funders Heritage Lottery Fund £969,000; Leicestershire County Council
Building contractor Interserve
Design and build interpretation (main contractor) Mark II
Interpretative design Objectives
Sub-contractor, graphic design Surface 3
Interactive floor OMI
Audio Audio Posts

is debated, challenging visitors to look past the traditional image of rural life and see it more as a continuing process of change. A showcase tries to illustrate this concept, highlighting changes in rural land use by including artefacts such as an 11,000-year-old arrowhead used by hunter-gatherers, items of medieval pottery and Victorian lamps.

Although objects are used to populate the thematic elements of the exhibition, the majority of real objects are displayed in a showcase running almost the entire length of the gallery. This striking case is crammed with items from the museum's social history collections. It features farming implements, toys and games, kitchen and domestic equipment and costume, including an example of the ubiquitous green-padded jacket worn by country people and a pair of designer Wellington boots.

Exiting the gallery, visitors go through a display that includes a traditional red telephone box. In a scene reminiscent of a Hollywood spy movie, as I walked past the box, the telephone began to ring. Having felt compelled to pick up the receiver, I was slightly disappointed to hear a message asking me to take part in a quiz about the box itself. Nevertheless, it is a simple device for visitors with an overactive imagination like me.

Melton's role as the foxhunting capital of England for more than 150 years is felt throughout the exhibition but the museum does not flinch from tackling the topic head on in a separate display close to the Town and Country exhibition.

A collection of hats, boots, whips and horns, along with books, trophies and souvenirs illustrate the huge economic and social impact of hunting on the town, which was a magnet for royalty and the rich and famous who flocked there for many years to hunt. There is also a whole showcase crammed with material from anti-hunt campaigners including placards, leaflets and a smashed video camera.

Visitors are left to make up their own minds about how they feel about hunting with a graphic giving reasons for and against, supplied by hunters and opponents, and the chance to take part in a vote. Although this opportunity was welcome, it would have been helpful to know how other visitors had voted. While it is good to see a balanced approach, it was rather low-key and maybe some oral history or video would have improved the interpretation of what is still a controversial subject.

When so many local-authority funded museums find themselves under threat from budget cuts, it is good to be able to praise a revamped museum that could be used an exemplar to any local or national politicians who are dubious about the value of such institutions.

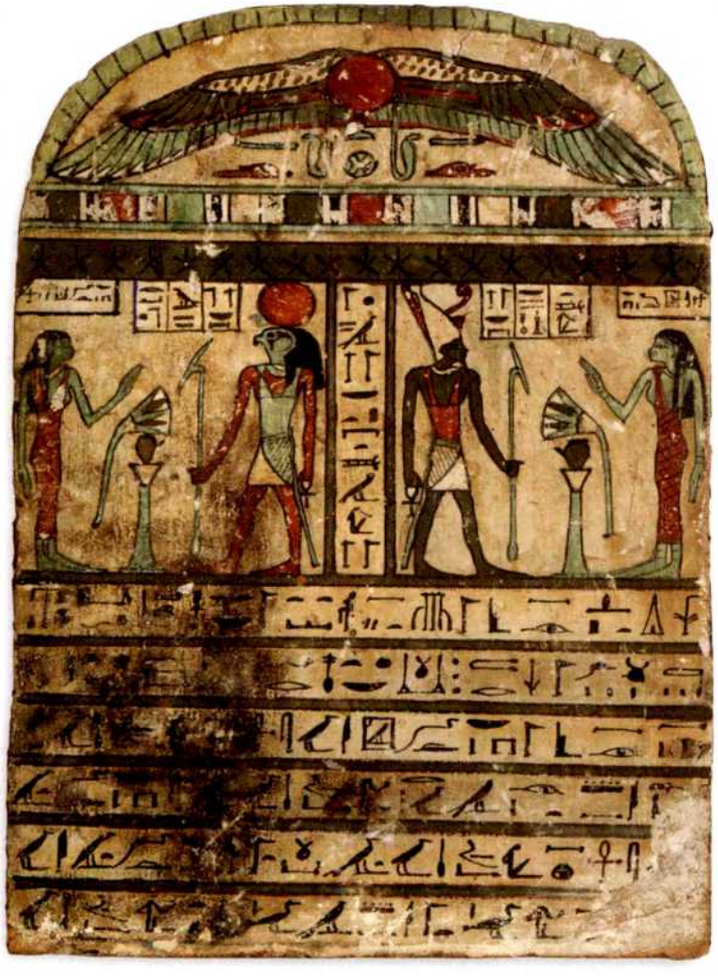
Despite its modest size, Melton Carnegie Museum exemplifies all that is good about local museums. Its displays are thoughtful, well interpreted and contemporary in the best sense, covering Melton Mowbray's past, present and future.

Tim Bryan is the head of collections at the Heritage Motor Centre, Gaydon

Below: foxhunting was a popular pursuit around Melton Mowbray and the museum takes an even-handed approach to the contentious issue

Egypt Gallery, Ipswich Museum, Suffolk

Children will enjoy Ipswich Museum's Egypt Gallery, but is there enough for adults, asks *Maria Blyzinsky*



Not only is Egypt a hot topic in the news following its political upheavals, the country's ancient artefacts have taken centre stage in several recent exhibitions. The Book of the Dead show at the British Museum and the revamped Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology (reviewed in *Museums Journal February 2011, p48*) have been joined by a modest but noteworthy display at Ipswich Museum.

Ipswich is one of the oldest local authority museums in Britain, having been in existence since 1846 and housed in its current location since 1881. The museum holds a significant Egyptology collection thanks to the Egypt Exploration Fund, which supported William Flinders Petrie's excavations during the late-19th century. In return for an annual subscription, donors received a parcel of objects at the end of each season.

Petrie's collections were some of the first to be properly excavated and systematically recorded, so they are an important historic archive. While these form the bulk of the new display, the collection has been augmented with objects gathered by local dignitaries returning from grand tours at the turn of the last century, as well as with material bought from local country houses.

The curators have also secured some key loans from the British Museum, including an imposing granite statue of the goddess Sekhmet, protector of the pharaohs. Both museums should be complimented on coming to an agreement to have the statue on open display. It attracts visitors and guards the entrance to the gallery.

This is the only significant collection of its kind in Suffolk, so it provides a unique resource for schools, with ancient Egypt a Key Stage 2 subject in the National Curriculum. This fact underlies the interpretive approach to the gallery, which has been devised specifically as a response to the schools market. In the words of Caroline McDonald, the curator of archaeology at Ipswich Museum, the gallery is "unashamedly targeted at schools and families, with an emphasis on 7 to 11 year olds".

The overall concept was developed in-house, while

Norwich design team Ugly Studios worked up the 3D details and mechanical interactives. Colours are bold, graphics are fun and text is kept to a minimum. Panels and plinths are relatively low and interpretation is multi-sensory, from the background sounds of daily life to the subtle scent of lotus flowers. There is space for school groups and lots of hands-on activities to keep children interested. I liked the "brass-rubbing"-style hieroglyphics and enjoyed peering into the crawl space with a drawing of a dung beetle inside.

The driving force behind the development was public access. For many years, the room was accessible only by steps. A high proportion of the budget was spent on altering the floor, which will make the space usable for the foreseeable future.

Today, a gentle ramp snakes through the gallery, leading visitors on a journey through daily life, rituals and beliefs, and preparations for the afterlife. The ramp creates a cavity that is used to advantage by inserting a couple of underfloor showcases to display artefacts from an early burial site. A model of a desiccated human body avoids the delicate issue of how, or whether, to display human remains.

These cases are in the final room, which considers the afterlife and contains some must-see objects, including the 2,500-year-old mummy and case of Lady Tahathor from Luxor, and the 2,000-year-old gilded funerary mask of Titus Flavius Demetrius from Roman-occupied Egypt.

This final space is the most successful part of the display thanks to the theatrical lighting and dramatic presentation. It is more reverential and focused than the daily life space, which has the feel of an empty classroom, slightly unkempt with half-completed interactives and dressing-up clothes in a heap.

Project data

Cost £240,000 (including cost to make the gallery accessible)
Main funders Colchester & Ipswich Museum Service; DCMS/Wolfson Fund £50,000; Friends of Ipswich Museum £16,000; Foot Bequest to Ipswich Museum £14,000
Curator Caroline McDonald
Designer Maggi Hayward
Education Caroline Hammer, Rachel McFarlane
Access Sophie Weaver
Gallery construction Elliston, Steady and Hawes
Audiovisual production AV Unit
Original artwork and interactive design and build Ugly Studios
Architect Hilary Brightman Conservation Architect
Display cases Click Netherfield
Lighting design Lighting Design and Technology

In comparison, the afterlife gallery literally sparkles with gold leaf, mirrors and lights. It emphasises the wow factor of these remarkable artefacts and the culture they represent.

Although I think the aims of this child-focused gallery are admirable and the team should be applauded for the amount achieved with the budget, I feel the museum has missed a trick by not catering for the needs of adults. On the sunny mid-week afternoon I visited, the only visitors I saw were adults. They were reminiscing about holidays among the pyramids, but few showcases kept their attention.

Adults are catered for through programming and public events. There are flaps to open in the gallery that reveal additional information, but these are written with teachers and parents in mind who might be seeking help with answering junior enquiries about "ma'at" and "shabtis" ("cosmic justice" and "helpers in the afterlife").

I was fascinated by the different canoptic jars used for storing specific organs removed during mummification: jars with the baboon head of Hapi were used to guard the lungs, and those with the jackal head of Duamutef guarded the stomach. I was desperate to find out more and couldn't help thinking that a simple graphic device of different font sizes (larger for children and smaller for adults) could provide layers of information without turning off the kids.

This is the first major development at the museum for 20 years. The topic was well-chosen and presented. It showcases the enthusiasm and skills of the in-house team.

Walking through the surrounding galleries, I was impressed by the quality of the collections, even though some of the displays look tired and dated. In spite of my adult-oriented reservations, I hope the Egypt Gallery will act as a prelude for greater things and wish the Ipswich team the best of luck as it considers making a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund to support further development.

Maria Blyzinsky is a freelance exhibitions consultant and co-founder of the Exhibitions Team

Left and right: a wooden funerary stela for Djedhathoriusank, the "Lady of the House", and a blue glass oil vessel. Above: the Egypt Gallery is aimed squarely at primary schoolchildren

Books

Out There: The Open Museum – Pushing the Boundaries of Museums' Potential

The ideas behind Glasgow's radical Open Museum are 20 years old, and just as important today, says *Timothy Mason*

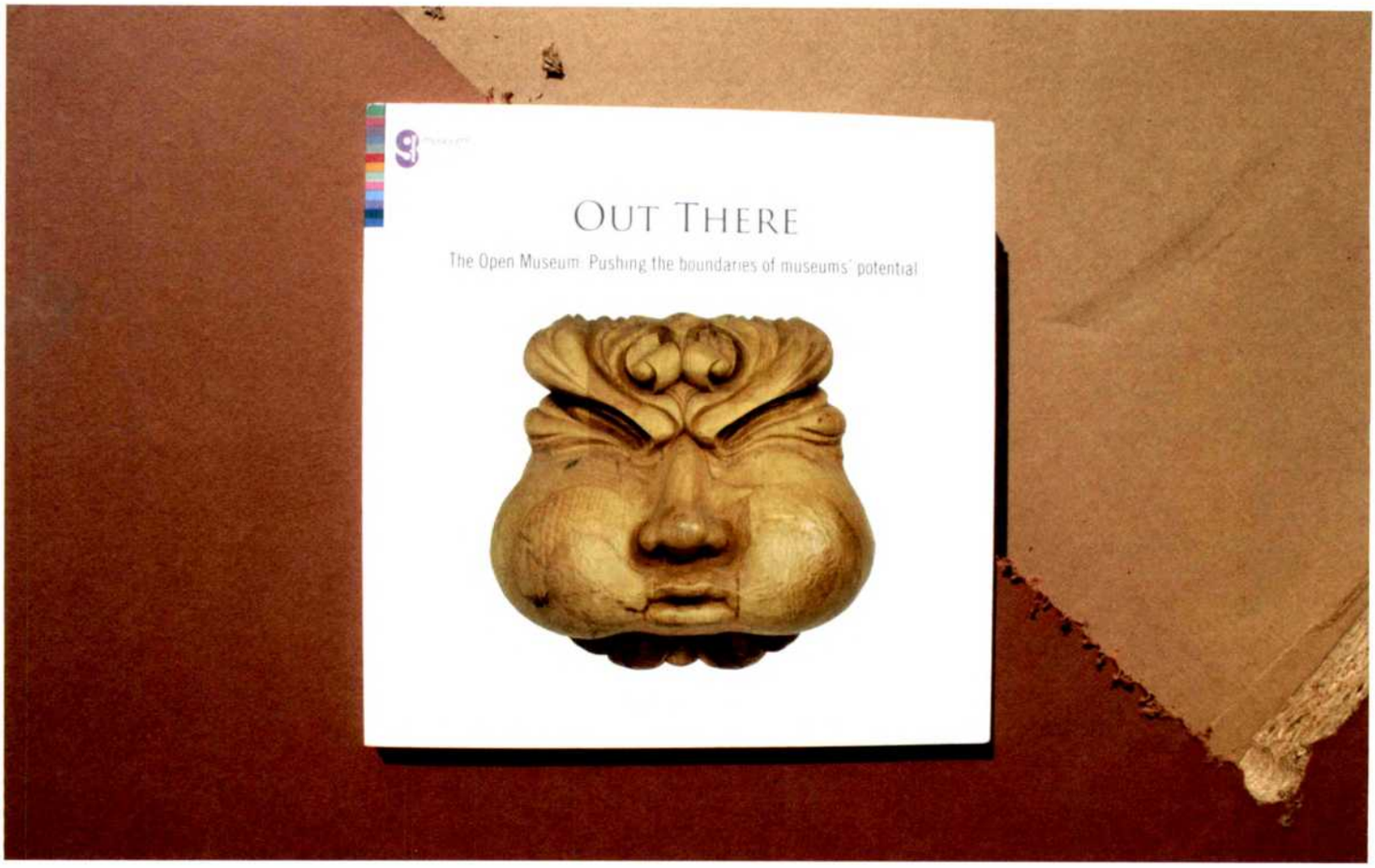
It is almost as much of a shock to realise that it is now more than 20 years since Glasgow was the UK's first European Capital of Culture, as it was for a southern-orientated arts press that Glasgow had been selected at all. The older among you will recall that the city defied the nay-sayers and Glasgow 1990 confirmed Scotland's largest conurbation as one of Europe's great cultural cities.

Amid the razzmatazz of 3,439 local, national and international events that made up Glasgow 1990's abundant programme, it was easy to miss the creation of the Open Museum, the brainchild of Julian Spalding who was then Glasgow's energetic director of museums. Its premise was a simple one – "to create a community museum that could draw upon any part of the city's collection and which could exist anywhere" – or put another way, "to democratise the sense of ownership (and thus enjoyment) of the collections, of museums and other cultural spaces and city festivals". It was a bold, even subversive, ambition.

Out There celebrates 20 years of the growth and development of the Open Museum and its steady integration into the mainstream of Glasgow's museum philosophy. In one of the book's numerous introductory chapters, Chris Jamieson, the current manager of the Open Museum, urges the reader to "dip into this book at any place – it is not meant to be read from cover to cover". It's a dangerously enticing piece of advice for a reviewer, but I am made of sterner stuff and, on your behalf, I diligently read each page of this slim volume.

In essence, Out There is a series of valuable case studies drawn from 20 years of practical experience on the frontline. They capture the breadth of the Open Museum's work – with women's groups, prisoners, storytellers, people with learning difficulties, asylum seekers and refugees, young people, the LGBT communities, Faslane protestors, and schoolchildren. It includes the use of reminiscence sessions, oral history recordings and touring exhibitions. It's a busy and impressive programme.

It's a revealing book that offers a number of very personal perspectives on the Open



Museum's first two decades as well as glimpses of the commitment of its staff. It is clear that there have been a number of significant achievements, but there has been blood on the carpet too, when ideas for exhibitions, or even exhibitions themselves, such as one on gangs in the city and another on sadomasochism, the latter using material from the Glasgow's Burrell Collection, have upset the politicians – the price, perhaps, of democracy.

I suspect that Out There also glosses over some heated internal debate. There's mention of "a whole Pandora's box of museological problems – of conservation; security; documentation; governance; curatorship". You can almost hear the discussion beginning.

What's missing from Out There, and it's a significant absence, is the participants' voice – this is something of a show-and-tell publication for the Open Museum team. I would have liked to hear more beyond the occasional boxed quote of the view from the other side – the In Here perspective. Measuring the impact of 20 years is a 360-degree task – democracy needs all voices to be heard.

There are, of course, many other museums doing similar work with comparable community groups, but few that have done so with such commitment over such a period of time and with a determination to integrate this approach into every corner of its work and its collection.

In the coming years, the Open Museum will be working closely with Glasgow Museums' research section, headed by Mark O'Neill, the former head of the service. This, and the chance to work closely with the cultural area teams, will create fresh partnerships and alliances for the Open Museum with libraries, arts and concert halls. It's a fascinating prospect. Watch this space over the next 20 years.

Meanwhile, dip into Out There – who knows what you might find?

Edited by Chris Jamieson, Glasgow Museums, £10, ISBN 978 0902752 86 3

Timothy Mason is a museum consultant

On my bookshelf

Abraham Thomas

In Praise of Shadows, by Junichiro Tanizaki

Junichiro Tanizaki's 1933 essay on aesthetics was a source of inspiration for an exhibition I curated at the Victoria and Albert Museum last year, 1:1 – Architects Build Small Spaces.

We commissioned seven international architects to build full-scale structures in the museum's galleries. Investigating notions of refuge, retreat and contemplation, their buildings allowed visitors to explore the power of small spaces. These themes echo the sentiments expressed in Tanizaki's wide-ranging essay – written at a time when western innovation was encroaching on the traditions of Japanese design and culture.

The text celebrates the beauty of nuance and the joys discovered in the ephemeral details of everyday life. His observations of the world offer an insight into what it means to dwell within, as opposed to simply inhabit, a built space. Likening a Japanese room to an inkwash painting, Tanizaki describes the "inhaling" and "exhaling" of light and darkness, and the sculpting of spatial solids and voids to create dwelling spaces of reflection and meditation. "Whenever I see the alcove of a tastefully built Japanese room, I marvel at our comprehension of the secrets of shadows... when we gaze into the darkness we are overcome with the feeling that in this small corner there reigns complete and utter silence; that here in the darkness immutable tranquillity holds sway."

Abraham Thomas is the curator of designs at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, and the lead curator for architecture

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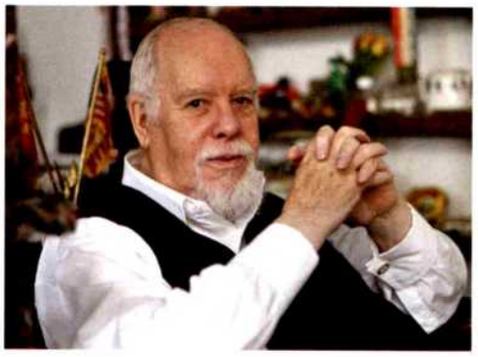
Profile Peter Blake: artist

The refurbished Holburne Museum of Art in Bath reopens this month with Peter Blake: A Museum for Myself, an exhibition looking at the common ground between the work and bizarre collecting habits of the celebrated pop artist and creator of the Beatles' Sergeant Pepper record sleeve.

Among all the other memorabilia, why do you collect toy elephants?
A while ago, I decided that if I concentrated on collecting them it might take the focus off amassing other things that were far more impractical. It's a kind of safety valve. For a while, of course, I simply bought almost every elephant I saw. My favourites have to be the fragile ones; I have a wooden one measuring just three inches, but its head and trunk have been roughly fixed back on with what has to be the biggest screw ever made.

What is your stand-out museum experience?
I was in Europe on a scholarship in the late 1950s and I went to the Prado in Madrid very early one morning. It was unusual in that it had a restaurant so I bought a ticket, had breakfast and then wandered around alone; I stood by myself looking at Velázquez's Las Meninas for a good half hour before anyone else came in.

Do you feel you missed out on the fame and fortune enjoyed by some modern artists?
There might have been a point a few years ago when I had very little but my head just above water. I'm probably what you'd call comfortable now, mainly through print-making. Part of what I called my "artificial retirement" a little while ago was stepping back from all the things



Pop artist Peter Blake is celebrated with a new exhibition at the Holburne Museum of Art, Bath

about art I could do without – the ambition, jealousy and avarice – while carrying on working. But I couldn't be jealous, say, of Damien [Hirst], in the same way you couldn't be jealous of Picasso.

You seem to remember the 1960s, so were you actually there?
I was at Abbey Road with the Beatles when amazing things happened and I recall everything. Their producer, George Martin, and I were the only people not completely out of it. I didn't take any drugs and gave up smoking when I was 12.

Is it true that one of your formative artistic experiences was drawing Quentin Crisp in life class?
Yes, at art school in Kent. All the models were real characters back then. There was an Italian family who'd arrive with a big bag of props so you could dress them as you wanted. They could be Romans in togas or Spanish fan dancers. One day, as Quentin left to get the train back to London – incredibly camp with blue hair and make-up – a lorry driver shouted: "You're a big fairy." Quentin looked up at him and replied: "If I were a real fairy, dear, I'd wave my magic wand and turn you into a pile of shit."

Moves

Natasha McEnroe takes up the directorship of the Florence Nightingale Museum, London, this month. She was previously museum manager of the Grant Museum of Zoology, London.

Elisabeth Elias has been named as president of Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales's board of trustees. Her term runs from 1 June to 31 May 2015. She is currently the vice-president of the museum.

Robin Johnson, formerly the senior learning officer at Coventry Heritage & Arts Trust, has taken up the new post of cultural curator with the Arc School, Nuneaton.

Seona Reid has become a trustee of the National Heritage Memorial Fund and chairwoman of the Heritage Lottery Fund's Committee for Scotland.

Two new project officers for learning and collections respectively have joined West Berkshire Council's heritage service: **Caroline Pantling**, who was family and informal learning coordinator with Museums Sheffield; and **Jennifer Allison**, who comes from the Ure Museum of Greek Archaeology, University of Reading, where she was the assistant curator.

The Royal Academy of Arts, London, has elected sculptor **Grayson Perry** as a Royal Academician in the category of printmaking.

Helen Giles, formerly curator at Hertford Museum, has become project manager at virtual tour company Pan 3Sixty. **Richard De Peyer** replaces her.

Natasha McEnroe

Elisabeth Elias

Labour peer **Richard Faulkner**, Shell UK chairman **James Smith**, and **Simon Linnett**, the executive vice-chairman of investment banking at Rothschild, have become trustees to the board of the National Museum of Science and Industry. **Howard Newby** and **Catherine Chisholm** have been reappointed.

Jane Edwards is the new director of Irvine's Scottish Maritime Museum. She succeeds Jim Tildesley, who had worked at the museum for more than 20 years.

Gordon Marshall, vice-chancellor of the University of Reading, becomes director of the Leverhulme Trust on 1 October. He succeeds **Richard Brook**, who will be retiring.

Who got the job?

Exhibition project manager (18-month fixed contract), Panacea Society, Bedford. Salary: £30,000 Advertised: MJ, November 2010

Lucinda Middleton
What attracted you to the job? It's an exciting opportunity to create a new museum from scratch, on my own.
The most interesting part of the job so far? Learning about millennial Christian groups in the UK – the Christian Israelites in Ashton-under-Lyne and the Jezreelites in Gillingham, to give two examples.
Other jobs Curator of fine and decorative arts, Royal Cornwall Museum, Truro; assistant curator, Nuneaton Museum and Art Gallery; junior assistant curator, London Transport Museum.
Qualifications MSt ethnology and museum ethnography; AMA, BA history of art and architecture.

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MUSEUM OF LONDON DOCKLANDS

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£32,659 (FTE), fixed term until 31 March 2012

The Museum of London is building its vision for the future development of the Museum of London Docklands. This exciting new post will be central to that process. The post holder will create and implement a research, consultation and collaboration strategy, building networks of partners, stakeholders and ambassadors. You will also lead on developing the concept and plan for a proposed new gallery, likely to focus on the East End, working closely with colleagues across the Museum.

We are looking for someone with experience of developing concepts for exhibitions and galleries, and up-to-date knowledge of museum thinking about interpretation, learning and evaluation. You will need a good grounding in the history of London in the 19th and 20th century, and ideally a particular knowledge of the history and present of the East End. Some knowledge of the history of empire, slavery and abolition would also be helpful. A proven ability to advise at a strategic level and engage with complex ideas is essential, as are excellent written communication skills and the ability to engage, consult and work with wide-ranging stakeholders. Experience of developing community collaboration and inclusion programmes will be an advantage. The successful candidate will drive the programme forward, collaborating effectively within and beyond the Museum.

Application forms and further details can be found at ***www.museumoflondon.org.uk/jobs*** Alternatively, please send a stamped self-addressed A4 envelope to Museum of London, 150 London Wall, London EC2Y 5HN, marked for the attention of HR, quoting reference number PRO7-1.

The closing date for applications is 5pm on Wednesday 4 May. Interviews will be held on Monday 16 May.

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To be successful in the role, you will have a proven track record in management of a visitor attraction or similar operation (including staff and budgets); excellent interpersonal and communication skills, and experience of working with external bodies and stakeholders. In addition, you will have experience in managing change and excellent organisational, administrative and time-management skills, combined with a personal belief in high level of customer care/service.

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Communities, Localities and Culture
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Ref: CLC00103

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Role Purpose
The Heritage Officer will help manage the archive and local history library collections, contribute to the provision of a popular enquiry service and promote the collections to the public through a range of learning and participation activities and events.

Key Responsibilities
You'll provide excellent customer service in the delivery of the public enquiry and research service for visitors to the Local History Library & Archives and remote users. You'll participate in the cataloguing, acquisition and preservation of archive and library collections relating to the history of Tower Hamlets, to professional standards, OR if your specialism is as an educator, you'll focus on the development and delivery of a programme of educational events, exhibitions, workshops and learning activities for diverse audiences in and around the borough.

Requirements
A qualified archivist or librarian with experience in local studies, or a heritage professional with equivalent experience in educational and interpretation work. The ability to lift and carry heavy boxes and an enhanced CRB disclosure is required for this post.

Additional Information
The East End of London is rightly famous for its rich history, having played host to a succession of migrant communities and revolutions in labour and industry. At Tower Hamlets Local History Library & Archives in Mile End, we're developing a new heritage centre for this unique and vibrant borough, providing residents and visitors alike with enhanced access to our extensive collections of archives, books, maps, photographs, press cuttings and museum objects.

An experienced Heritage Officer is sought to join our small and friendly team. A graduate-calibre professional with a strong background in archives, museums or local studies libraries, you'll be passionate about the history of London. Keen to promote the value of learning about heritage and broaden access to it to a diverse and multicultural local community, you'll uphold the highest professional standards in your work with collections, love working closely with others, and be up for a challenge.

Benefits and Allowances
Benefits of the role include an enhancement for Saturday working and final salary pension scheme.

For further details/ information regarding the post, please contact Tamsin Bookey, Heritage Manager, 020 7364 1293, email *tamsin.bookey@towerhamlets.gov.uk*

All applications to be made via online application form.
Please go to *www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/careers*

No CV's or alternative forms of applications are accepted

Closing date: 15 May 2011

MODIP
Museum of Design in Plastics

Invitation to tender: Collections Reviewer

Organisation: Museum of Design in Plastics
Fee: £250 per day
Closing Date: April 30th 2011

Applications are invited from individuals to undertake a comprehensive review of the Horn Collection at the Museum of Design in Plastics (MoDip).

The Museum of Design in Plastics (MoDiP)
MoDiP is a specialist research resource within the Arts University College at Bournemouth. It has in its care approximately 10,000 artefacts of predominantly 20th and 21st century mass-produced design and popular culture.

The Horn Collection
MoDiP has recently received on loan, initially for a period of seven years, the Horn Collection of the Worshipful Company of Horners. The collection consists of 400+ items, made from horn, a by-product of the meat industry, and a natural plastic. It includes a wide range of different, but usually relatively small objects dating from the early 17th century to the present. The collection has basic documentation and has been digitized with multiple views. It has, however, been seen by very few people.

Collection Review Project
At the heart of the Horn Collection project is a desire to take these artefacts out of store and bring them to the attention of a wide range of people. The MoDiP team wishes to work with the reviewer to learn more about horn, to understand better the strengths and weakness of this collection of horn, and to extend its knowledge of other horn collections and resources.

Applications to undertake the stored collection review at MoDiP should be received by May 6th 2011. Short listed candidates will be contacted by May 16th 2011.

The review is expected to take place at a time agreed between the MoDiP team and the appointed reviewer(s). It should be completed by the end of July 2011.

Please send a covering letter addressing the person specification above and a CV to: Susan Lambert: *slambert@aucb.ac.uk*

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The MA website carries details of all the best jobs in the museum, gallery and heritage sectors. The MA site is very popular and visitor numbers are rising all the time. The jobs pages are the most visited on the site and online has the advantage of being up-to-the-minute in terms of current opportunities.

From July 2010 the **MA's e-newsletter** moved from monthly to weekly, greatly increasing its profile. With over 27,000 subscribers it enjoys very strong viewing rates and click-throughs. The top jobs of the week are displayed prominently on the e-newsletter. You can subscribe today at **www.museumsassociation.org**

MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

To download our new media pack with more details about recruitment advertising go to **www.museumsassociation.org/advertise** or phone Richard Eckles on 020 7426 6914.

Wanted: A home for a house knitted by a team of Wiltshire knitters. The knitters want to continue adding to the house – a knitted lawn and plum trees are planned

Venice, Evening by Howard Hodgkin has been acquired by Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales

© BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY

Untitled, Thatcher by Peter Kennard is now at the Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry

COURTESY HERBERT ART GALLERY & MUSEUM © PETER KENNARD

On offer

When disposing, give priority to transferring, preferably by gift, to accredited museums. Any proposed sales to other museums listed here have been judged to be compatible with the Museums Association's (MA) code of ethics. For further advice, see the MA's ethical guidelines (*www.museumsassociation.org*) or contact the MA's ethics department (020 7426 6953). More details about some of the items on offer below can be found on the MA's Find an Object listing service, *www.museumsassociation.org/collections/find-an-object*. Find an Object allows you to post adverts for disposals or loans throughout the month. All objects for sale on the Find an Object site must comply with Section 6 of the MA's code of ethics. Disposal toolkit guidelines can be found at *www.museumsassociation.org/collections/disposal*

● The Chiltern Open Air Museum offers a large number of women's undergarments and infants' clothing, including christening robes and a dress said to have been made from an off-cut of a dress for **Queen Victoria**. The clothes date from the mid-19th century. List on request.
Contact: Jennie Booth
tel: 01494 871117
email: artefactscoam@btconnect.com

● North Somerset Council offers a variety of **firearms** to appropriately licensed museums. Full list available.
Contact: Nick Goff
tel: 01934 621028
email: nick.goff@n-somerset.gov.uk

● The Royal Air Force Museum, London, wishes to dispose of a large number of firearms, primarily **small arms**, to appropriately licensed museums. Details on request. The offer is open until 1 June.
Contact: Ian Alder
email: ian.alder@rafmuseum.org

Wanted

● Colne Valley Museum, Huddersfield, is looking for **clogmakers' knives** used for cutting the wooden soles of clogs. A set comprising a block knife, hollower and gripper would be ideal, but offers of any individual knives would be useful.
Contact: Anne Lord
tel: 01484 659762
email: info@colnevalleymuseum.org.uk

● The **Falkland Islands Museum & National Trust** needs good second-hand display cases. Used mannequins, stands and other exhibition materials are also required.
Contact: Leona Roberts
tel: 00 500 27428
email: museum.manager@horizon.co.fk

● A house knitted by a team of **Wiltshire knitters** needs a museum home. The house is 8 x 6 foot with an 18 x 10 foot garden. The knitters want to continue adding to the house – a knitted lawn and plum trees are planned.
Contact: Val Proctor
email: valandgeoff@talktalk.net

● The Queen's Royal Surrey Regiment Museum, Clandon Park, is in **urgent need** of its own army of volunteers. The refurbished museum celebrates the regiment's 350th anniversary in November.
Contact: Tony Ward
tel: 01428 683939
email: gandt@homewiththewards.freeserve.co.uk

Acquisitions

● Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales has acquired Venice, Evening, a hand-painted etching and aquatint print by **Howard Hodgkin**, thanks to funding grants from the Nerys Johnson Contemporary Art

Fund and the Derek Williams Trust, which each awarded a grant of £9,000.

● The Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry, has acquired five works by contemporary British artists Peter Kennard and Cat Picton-Phillips to add to its Peace and Reconciliation collection. The acquisitions are supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund Collecting Cultures programme and the Art Fund. There are three Kennard works – **Untitled, Thatcher** photomontage; Target London; and the Kent Portfolio, (Photomontages 1973-1991) – and two joint collections of work – Award Portfolio and Photo Op – by kennardphillipps in the acquisition.

● A self-portrait of artist **Brian Hatton** has been donated to Hereford Museum by a relative, Geoffrey Vevers, through the Art Fund.

● The **Frome Hoard** and the **Iron Age Gold Hoard** of neck torcs uncovered near Stirling have been secured for the nation thanks to the Art Fund and the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF). The Museum of Somerset will receive the £320,250 Frome Hoard and over £100,000 towards its conservation following the announcement of a £294,026 grant from the NHMF. This follows a fundraising campaign launched by the Art Fund with a grant of £40,250, to raise the funds needed for the find of over 52,000 silver and bronze coins found in 2010. The public donated £13,657, which the Art Fund match-funded with a further £10,000. The acquisition was also made possible due to funding from the Somerset Archaeological and Natural History Society, the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund, and the Headley Trust among others.

Oscar Wilde features in the Victoria and Albert Museum's Cult of Beauty app

Kettle's Yard, Cambridge, is to receive major HLF funding

The National Museum of Scotland has received the four torcs. The £462,000 needed for the torcs was raised by grants of from the NHMF (£154,000), the Art Fund (£100,000), National Museums Scotland (£123,000); and the Scottish Government (£85,000).

● The Royal Marines Museum, Portsmouth, has acquired a presentation sword 200 years after the battle it commemorates. The sword was presented to Captain Robert Torrens following the **battle for Anholt** in 1811. Thanks to a major grant from the Art Fund, the item was bought at auction for £27,170.

Export bar

● The culture minister has placed a temporary export bar on a 19th-century William IV cabinet on a stand – the only known complete survivor of a set of four such cabinets made for the scholar, connoisseur and collector **William Beckford**. The decision on the export licence application for the cabinet will be deferred for a period ending on 8 May. This period may be extended until 8 August if a serious intention to raise funds with a view to making an offer to purchase the cabinet at the price of £285,000 (plus £57,000 VAT, which can be reclaimed by most public museums) is expressed. Anyone interested in making an offer to buy the cabinet should contact the owner's agent through: *The Secretariat, The Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest, Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, Grosvenor House, 14 Bennetts Hill, Birmingham, B2 5RS, tel: 0207 273 8271*

Funding

● A consortium led by Conwy County Borough Council in partnership with Gwynedd Council, Snowdonia National Park Authority and the National Trust has been awarded £450,000 funding under the European-funded Heritage Tourism Project. **Princes of Gwynedd** will identify clusters of sites in localised areas including Conwy, Caernarfon and Betws y Coed. The scheme will create the equivalent of seven full-time posts through the economic impact of extra visitors, and will include improved signage, a new website, maps, and a new welcome centre.

● The Glenmorangie Company has renewed its three-year sponsorship deal with National Museums Scotland to support the study and understanding of the **Early Historic people of Scotland.** The second phase of the collaboration will run until the end of 2013.

● The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has confirmed funding of £10m for four heritage sites

MA events calendar

MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

The MA regularly organises events, conferences and seminars. For further information, see www.museumsassociation.org/events or contact: Lorraine O'Leary 02074266940 lorraine@museumsassociation.org

Getting the most out of the AMA
11 May 2011, London
A workshop for anyone undertaking or thinking about undertaking the Associate of the Museums Association (AMA). The morning looks at the AMA's knowledge journal, how to find a mentor and how to write a CPD plan. In the afternoon we will explore the updated AMA criteria, the work-based project and the professional review. Participants are welcome to come for the entire day or just the afternoon.

Mentor refresher
6 July 2011, South East
A workshop for existing mentors of the AMA to receive an update on any developments in the scheme. Come along to catch up with the professional development department, refresh your mentoring skills and share information with other mentors.

Introduction to mentoring
6 July 2011, South East
A workshop for anyone who is committed to continuing professional development and wants to become a mentor for the AMA. We will guide you through all stages in the mentoring process.

To book CPD events, email the name, date and location of the event you wish to attend, along with your contact details, to cpd@museumsassociation.org or call 020 7426 6955

across the UK: **Kettle's Yard**, Cambridge; **Cardigan Castle**, Ceredigion; **Charleston Barns**, Lewes; and the **Royal Crescent**, Bath. More than £1m in development funding has also been awarded to seven projects that can now develop applications for a full HLF grant. These include the redevelopment of **Brecknock Museum & Art Gallery**, Powys, and the redisplay of the collection of 17th- and 18th-century European decorative arts at the **Victoria and Albert Museum**, London.

Awards

● Twelve London museums have won Green Tourism awards for making their buildings more sustainable. The Green Tourism Business Scheme is supported by Renaissance London. The **Whitehall Museum** and **Horniman Museum** won gold awards; silvers went to **Brunel Museum**; the **Florence Nightingale Museum**; the **Freud Museum**; **Islington Museums**; **Queen Elizabeth's Hunting Lodge**; **Geffrye Museum**; **London Transport Museum**; and the **Museum of London**; the **Fashion and Textile Museum** and **Wandsworth Museum** won bronzes. And elsewhere, **Manchester United**'s museum and tour centre has received a silver award.

Spartacus Chetwynd – pictured, An Evening with Jabba the Hutt – is on the shortlist for the 2011 MaxMara Art Prize

● Artists Spartacus Chetwynd, Christina Mackie, Avis Newman, Laure Prouvost and Emily Wardill have been shortlisted for the fourth **MaxMara Art Prize For Women**, an award organised jointly by the Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, and the Maramotti family, owners of the Max Mara Fashion Group. The winner will be announced in September.

● Thinktank, Birmingham Science Museum has been named the **Winner of Winners** at the Birmingham Best Business Awards for Worklife Balance. The organisation was recognised for its exceptional culture of flexible working, and for successfully balancing the needs of the business with those of its staff.

David Chipperfield Architects has won the Mies van der Rohe Award for its work at the Neues Museum, Berlin

● The 2011 European Union Prize for Contemporary Architecture – the **Mies van der Rohe Award** – has been won by London-based David Chipperfield Architects for its work for the Neues Museum, Berlin. Zaha Hadid Architects was also on the six-strong shortlist for its design of the MAXXI: Museum of XXI Century Arts in Rome.

● The winner of the **Fourth Plinth Schools Award** is 12-year-old Dinesh Kalamegam from Langdon School, Newham, with his Eco London design.

Web news

● **Museumpreneurs**, which looks at how museums can enhance their entrepreneurial skills, is now online: *http://museumpreneurs.org*

● The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, has launched its first smartphone app. Priced at £2.99, **The Cult of Beauty** app combines a walking tour through Chelsea with an audioguide within the exhibition. The guide will provide an introduction to 25 masterpieces within the exhibition. The Cult of Beauty show runs until 17 July. *www.vam.ac.uk*

● The **London Canal Museum** has launched a mobile version of its website for smartphones. The site includes an audioguide that navigates the towpath between the museum and Camden Town. *www.canalmuseum.mobi*

Miscellaneous

● An outline of new recommendations on vetting and barring in **child protection policy** is in the MLA Safeguarding guidance supplement (March 2011) produced with the NSPCC. *www.mla.gov.uk/what/programmes/commissioning/CPD/safeguarding_welfare*

© NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY, LONDON (WILDE); © STAATLICHE MUSEEN ZU BERLIN, PHOTOGRAPHY: ACHIM KLEMER (NEUES)

Members' meetings

In the summer of 2011 the Museums Association (MA) is launching a series of members' meetings for each devolved nation and English region. These events will be free to attend and will be open to all individual members of the MA.

Each members' meeting will run for a full day and will include a variety of content related to the region or nation where the meeting will be held. Each day will also include an opportunity to hear about and contribute to the MA's policy, advocacy and project work.

The first meeting will be held in Wales on 30 June, with subsequent meetings being planned over the next year for London, the East Midlands and Yorkshire and Humberside.

More information about the members' meetings will be posted on the MA website shortly. *www.museumsassociation.org*

This year's Museums Association conference is in Brighton

Museums Association annual conference and exhibition
3-4 October 2011,
The Brighton Centre, Brighton

Brighton plays host to the Museums Association conference and exhibition 2011. This year we are running the whole event over two days with reduced costs for delegates to attend.

The event is the most important in the museum calendar and a must-attend for all working in museums and galleries, including suppliers of products and services. It brings together UK professionals to debate the latest thinking and discover new ideas.

The preliminary themes for the conference are: *Next top model:* creating the museums of the future; *Innovate:* thinking your way out of the crisis; and *Get connected:* creating and sustaining networks. *For more information, visit www.museumsassociation.org/conference*

Tony Ray-Jones: Beauty Contest, Southport 1967 Guernsey Photography Festival

Jean-Christophe Godet

"As a Frenchman, I really like the 'Englishness' of the work of Tony Ray-Jones in general and this picture in particular. There's a lot of his own personal style on show here; it's almost like a caricature as there's a sense of humour behind the stories he tells.

While he had a very light touch, he's not trying to take the Mickey out of the characters. You almost think he's in love with the people he sees but at the same time he's showing the reality of every situation. In this photograph, you see what's really happening behind the scenes at what, presumably, should have been a glamorous event.

I think Ray-Jones learned to become completely 'invisible'; here he is, right in the centre of the 'action' but everyone's ignoring him. That's very hard to achieve in this kind of photo-documentary. That alone made Ray-Jones a fantastic photographer who changed a lot of minds about what photography could accomplish.

On top of that, there's the actual composition of the photograph. There's the guy on the right looking at the young lady's bottom, for example; his gaze is pulling us towards the centre and then your eyes jump around the picture taking in all the other details such as the signs, the other onlookers and the old man in a suit drinking his tea. The balance is perfect.

Ray-Jones' work is ideal for the second Guernsey Photography Festival, which explores the theme of 'identity'. It's interesting that the island has been influenced by both French and English culture and I want to open a debate locally about what makes the place tick while looking at how photographers have captured different identities.

There will be around 30 exhibitions plus talks, demonstrations and community activities throughout the month. We have, for example, a show by the African photographer Samuel Fosso who has been producing self-portraits for 25 years; we're exhibiting him outdoors in a beautiful garden.

I moved here with my family three years ago and, as a photographer myself, was surprised to find that there were four very active photographic clubs on a small island of just 60,000 people.

People come here wanting to take their own photographs of such a beautiful place. The purpose of the festival, however, is to inspire people to look beyond the traditional landscape photography and to be a bit more curious; in the same way, perhaps, that Ray-Jones looked beyond the confines of commercial photography in the 1960s.

If you work on your skills and widen your vision, you can tell a variety of different stories."

Jean-Christophe Godet is the director of the Guernsey Photography Festival

Interview by John Holt. Jean-Christophe Godet is the director of the Guernsey Photography Festival which runs throughout June in venues across St Peter Port.

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Power struggle
Who should lead the

Going underground
Rowan Brown and the National Mining Museum Scotland

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Above: Living Worlds at the Manchester Museum, reviewed on p40

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MAIN COVER IMAGE: EXTRAORDINARY MEASURES, BELSAY HALL, 2011 | ENGLISH HERITAGE/SLINKACHU © ANT CLAUSEN PHOTOGRAPHY (MANCHESTER)

Editorial

New funding approach embraces public benefit

Museums in England will come under the jurisdiction of the arts council from the autumn, and now is a crucial time for shaping how that relationship will work and the future strategic direction of the sector. Arts Council England (ACE) has shown that it is willing to listen to what the sector has to say.

The Museums Association (MA) has drafted a radical new model for investment in regional museums as part of its contribution to the debate. The new framework moves away from hubs and the core museum idea, taking as its starting point demonstrable public benefit as a prerequisite for funding.

Museums in England have had 10 years of Renaissance investment, and the infrastructure and capacity of the hubs, public sector cuts notwithstanding, should be on a good footing by now. Breaking away from that hub model and reaching across a broader range of organisations and partnerships is a logical step in the right direction. The emphasis on public benefit is good for organisations and audiences, and more museums getting funding means a far-reaching and more equitable spread of investment.

'Breaking away from the hub model and reaching across a broader range of organisations is a logical step in the right direction'

It is unfortunate that the timing of the transition to ACE means that decisions about funding for the next three years are being made before there has been a chance for a proper conversation about the strategic direction of the sector as a whole. But it is not too late to do this and if ACE takes the brave decision to follow the MA's lead now, it will set a marker for the strategy to follow.

Sharon Heal, editor, Museums Journal
sharon@museumsassociation.org
www.twitter.com/sharonheal
For the full MA response, see www.museumsassociation.org/ace and news, p9

There will be a keynote speaker from the arts council and sessions debating the new museum landscape and national strategies at the MA conference on 3-4 October in Brighton (*www.museumsassociation.org/conference*).

Art Fund announces shortlists for museum and learning prizes

Winner of public vote fails to make shortlist

Rebecca Atkinson

The shortlists for the Art Fund Prize and the new Clore Award for Learning were revealed last month.

The museums in the running for the main prize are: the British Museum (for a History of the World); the Robert Burns Birthplace Museum, Alloway; the Roman Baths Museum in Bath; and the Polar Museum, Cambridge.

Contenders for the £10,000 learning award are: Weston Park, Sheffield, for With Sheba and Arwa; National Museum of the Royal Navy, Portsmouth for Face to Face: the South London Gallery, London for Making Play; the Pitt Rivers Museum and the Oxford University Museum of Natural History, Oxford, for Making Museums; and Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums, Newcastle upon Tyne, for Culture Shock.

Chairman of judges, Michael Portillo

But the museum that topped the public poll has not made it onto the shortlist for the £100,000 accolade.

An online public poll saw Manchester's People's History Museum gain top spot with 26.3% of the vote.

Chairman of the judges Michael Portillo said: "Choosing a shortlist was not easy but we are agreed that these four museums and galleries exhibit remarkable innovation and flair, which excited us and clearly draws in the general public too."

Three services in East Anglia consider merging

Norfolk, Colchester and Ipswich services could become a single trust

Patrick Steel

Museum services in Norfolk, Ipswich and Colchester could merge to become a single trust.

Winckworth Sherwood has been commissioned to carry out an options appraisal on whether a full merger is viable. The law firm is expected to make recommendations at the end of July.

Vanessa Trevelyan, Norfolk's head of museums, said: "The idea is to make the best economies of scale and build on our partnership.

"We would keep the advantages of our relationship with our local authority, which would continue to own the buildings and assets, but gain the advantages of being more independent."

Operating as an independent trust would save Norfolk Museums £500,000 on rates, but Peter Berridge, museum manager at Colchester and Ipswich, said the economies of scale could even free up enough money to take on more staff.

Norwich Castle Museum could be part of merged services

"Although we are the smaller partner, we believe there are lots of benefits for all three services," he said. "As the largest services in Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk, we can tell the story of the region."

An independent trust would have more chance of becoming a core museum, Berridge acknowledged, but he insisted it was not the main impetus behind the appraisal.

"If we do not become a core museum, we will need the partnership more than ever," he said.

A source close to the services said sharing expertise would not be a problem, but it was not known whether they had the assets to generate enough income independent of their local authorities.

National museums' group consults on its future role

Consultation on NMDC's future fuels concern over duplication of roles

Patrick Steel

A consultation on the future strategy of the National Museum Directors' Conference (NMDC) has led other organisations that represent museums to warn against a duplication of roles.

As well as asking about the NMDC's future role and policy priorities, the survey asked respondents what type of museums should be included in its membership.

Options given included: UK nationals; all directly government-funded UK museums; core museums; museums over a certain size; and all major publicly funded museums. The option of a layer of associate membership was also on the list.

David Fleming, director of National Museums Liverpool, an NMDC member and a member of the board of the Museums Association (MA), said: "Some NMDC members want to expand its role but I'm not one of them.

The NMDC's remit could be extended beyond nationals such as the Victoria and Albert Museum

"NMDC members should be government-funded national museums, giving it a strong identity, logic and legitimacy. It should not attempt to take on a wider role because that wider role is fulfilled by the MA."

Bill Ferris, chairman of the Association of Independent Museums (AIM), said: "With respect to the NMDC, which does a brilliant job of representing its members, I'm not sure what it knows about independent museums, and I don't think it could claim to represent the whole sector.

"It should work with the MA, AIM and local-authority groups to make sure there is joined-up advocacy at the highest levels."

Sarah Levitt, head of museums at Leicester City Council, said: "It's a huge agenda and it needs to take into account how the MA and arts council intend to cover these areas, and also the representative framework for museums nationally."

An NMDC spokeswoman emphasised that it was not planning a "massive expansion of membership".

She added: "The main purpose of the review is to look at the strategy and vision of the NMDC, and the membership question needs to be considered in this context. We expect to make changes as a result of the consultation, but those are for the directors to consider once the consultation process has finished."

● See vox pop p21

New ministers in Northern Ireland and Wales

Changes to cultural policy due after May elections

Rebecca Atkinson

Museums in Wales and Northern Ireland are waiting to hear how their respective cultural policies might change following last month's elections.

After winning half the seats in the Welsh government, Labour's Carwyn Jones was appointed first minister. He announced his intention to form a Labour-only administration, rather than a coalition with Plaid Cymru or the Liberal Democrats.

Wales has previously had a minister with sole responsibility for heritage, but Huw Lewis has been appointed minister for housing, regeneration and heritage.

David Anderson, director general of Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales, said there were opportunities for museums in Wales to work across the wider ministerial portfolio, especially around regeneration, and to demonstrate the relevance of culture and heritage.

As part of Northern Ireland's new coalition government, Sinn Fein has taken over the culture, arts and leisure brief for the first time. Carál Ní Chuilín takes over as culture minister from Democratic Unionist Nelson McCausland, who caused controversy last year after he urged the Ulster Museum to reflect creationism in displays.

Carál Ní Chuilín takes over as Northern Ireland culture minister

One of Ní Chuilín's first public duties was to unveil the refurbished Cultra Manor at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum.

"The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure is responsible for a diverse portfolio that impacts on each and every one of us on some level," she said.

"I am looking forward to meeting arms-length bodies and leading the department through the challenges ahead."

In brief

Museums' green accolade
Twelve museums have won Green Tourism Business Scheme awards for their commitment to environmental sustainability. Supported by Renaissance London, the museums spent months improving their energy efficiency, biodiversity and waste management, as well as staging exhibitions on environmental lessons from the past. The Whitehall Museum and Florence Nightingale Museum were among the winners.

Silk Mill closure slammed

Trade union leaders in Derby have spoken out against the closure of the city's Silk Mill Museum, at their annual rally. The Conservative-led city council is to mothball the museum for up to two years in a bid to save £400,000, which will be reinvested in other museums.

'Museums aid wellbeing'
Health professionals should make use of the "remarkable resources" of museums and galleries to improve wellbeing among disadvantaged groups, according to Who Cares?, a new booklet published by Renaissance North West. The report outlines the impact of six museum projects on mental health, physical disability and social exclusion.

Pumphouse to shut
The Pumphouse Educational Museum in Rotherhithe, London, is to close in August after Southwark Council cut its core funding for 2011-12. The museum is unable to apply for further grants without the funding. The Young Archaeologists' Club, which operates from the facility, will move to the Creekside Centre in Deptford.

Every picture tells a story: Imperial War Museum North exhibition looks at reporting from war zones

The Imperial War Museum North in Manchester is taking an in-depth look at some of the most daring reporters of the past century in its exhibition, War Correspondents: Reporting Under Fire Since 1914. The exhibition bears witness to the difficulties and dramas of reporting on conflicts, with the objects on display ranging from dispatches from the first world war to the burka worn by BBC reporter John Simpson to sneak into Afghanistan in 2001. Pictured is Norman Smart of the Daily Express typing up his story on the fall of Tripoli in January 1943. The exhibition runs until 2 January 2012.

Union slams MoL's plans

Archaeological service's privatisation criticised

Patrick Steel

Plans by the Museum of London (MoL) to privatise its archaeological service and set it up as an independent charity, along with the voluntary redundancies of 11 posts, including senior curators in prehistory and Roman history, have been condemned by the Prospect trade union.

Prospect negotiator Dave Allen said: "We are particularly concerned that the cuts, in conjunction with the planned privatisation of the archaeology service, mark a turning away by MoL from archaeology and London's early history."

But the MoL's director of programmes, David Spence, said: "We are essentially separating profit from non-profit making parts of the museum. It does not change the day-to-day operation of our archaeology department."

'Community work needs overhaul'

Investigation suggests root and branch review of engagement work

Simon Stephens

Museums need to carry out a root and branch review of community engagement work, according to a report by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

The report, Whose Cake Is It Anyway? follows a two-year investigation into the way in which 12 UK museums work with the public.

One of the aims of the research, carried out by consultant Bernadette Lynch, is to help the foundation and other funding bodies direct resources in ways that will deepen community participation in museums.

The Museum of East Anglian Life was one of 12 museums featured in the investigation

A key finding is that a dependence on project funding for engagement work means that these activities remain marginalised in museums. Project funding leads to short-termism, a lack of strategic planning and pressure to produce positive reports to secure future funding, rather than honest assessments of what works.

Community partners were often left disillusioned by offers of collaboration and co-production, which result in what Lynch described as "empowerment-lite".

In light of funding cuts, the report said "the time is ripe for a root and branch review of the purpose and fundamental goal of this work".

Lynch said the best work often took place at small museums that were embedded in communities. She added that this could be scaled up to larger museums if new ways of working were adopted.

Piotr Bienkowski, a board member of the North West Federation of Museums, has developed a three- to four-year programme to address some of the issues in the report. Only the 12 museums that took part in the research will be allowed to apply for a share of the programme's proposed £3m fund.

The Paul Hamlyn Foundation will decide whether to go ahead with the programme at a board meeting on 5 July.

The 12 participants were: Belfast Exposed; Bristol Museums; Museum of East Anglian Life; Glasgow Museums; Hackney Museum, London; Lightbox, Surrey; Museum of London; Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales; Manchester Museum; Ryedale Folk Museum; Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums; and Wolverhampton Arts and Heritage Service.

Network of volunteers to help developing world

Heritage body to offer skills and conservation training in developing countries

Gareth Harris

A new London-based organisation aims to establish a network of volunteers that can be deployed abroad on conservation projects at museums, historic buildings and archeological sites.

Heritage Without Borders (HWB), based at University College London (UCL), said its "big idea is that communities in developing countries will be able to tap into valuable skills that would otherwise be too expensive to obtain, while HWB volunteers will gain life and professional skills".

The scheme hopes to recruit recent graduates and heritage professionals.

Its first two projects, lined up for September, involve training heritage specialists in Merv, Turkmenistan, and delivering a week of conservation training at the National Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo.

Conservators Without Borders running a training session with heritage professionals in Jordan

HWB co-director Sally MacDonald, director of museums and collections at UCL, said: "We are aiming to work in situations of poverty and post-conflict. Where a country or organisation is well resourced, they can and do buy in services from consultants or, indeed, from universities, as is happening all over the Gulf at the moment.

"We are looking at the kinds of projects that simply wouldn't be able to access skills otherwise."

The other co-directors are Dominica D'Arcangelo, an archaeological conservator, and Melina Smirniou, a conservator at the British Museum.

The pair initially founded the Conservators Without Borders organisation, which ran a series of conservation projects in Jordan, Greece and Peru after receiving a UCL grant.

"Heritage Without Borders is ambitious, but as far as I'm aware, there is no other organisation like this in the UK," added MacDonald.

"Our aim is to be working on five to seven projects after a period of five years."

The organisation, which works with governmental and non-governmental bodies, will also focus on areas such as collections management, cataloguing and digitisation, as well as issues relating to exhibitions and public outreach in partner institutions.

HWB is a social enterprise initiative financed primarily through grants and donations.

Royal Opera House to host Olympics exhibition

Free event to run during London 2012 games

Geraldine Kendall

The Royal Opera House has been chosen as the venue for a centrepiece exhibition about the Olympic Games.

The free exhibition about the history of the competition, Olympic Journey: the Story of the Games, will run throughout the games.

The exhibition will show objects on loan from the Olympic Museum in Switzerland, which is shut for refurbishment. It will be the biggest partnership between the museum and a host country so far.

Several rooms in the Royal Opera House will be devoted to the exhibition, which will include a hall of champions and a display of every Olympic torch since 1936.

But questions have been asked about why the exhibition was not offered to a London museum or gallery.

The London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (Locog) said the Royal Opera House had been chosen because of its central location in Covent Garden and because it is closed during the summer season.

According to a Locog spokeswoman, sponsor BP started talks with the Olympic Museum. "They wanted to have the exhibition somewhere that would reach a wide audience and attract people who wouldn't normally come."

Former Olympian Jonathan Edwards with the 1948 Olympic torch and gold medals from 1908 and 1948

The exhibition is part of the London 2012 Festival, the finale of the Cultural Olympiad programme that has been staging cultural events across the UK in the build-up to the games.

Most of London's national museums are staging exhibitions during the festival. The British Museum and National Gallery are planning blockbuster exhibitions, while the National Portrait is hosting the Road to 2012 project.

● See feature, p28

In brief

Chinese archive unveiled
An online archive of Chinese history and culture in Manchester has been launched. The £50,000 project was developed by the Manchester Chinese Centre, Manchester City Council and the Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester. The archive documents Chinese heritage in the city since the 1900s.
http://bit.ly/lEUdnC

Heritage Open Days 2011

More than 4,000 properties will take part in Heritage Open Days 2011, an English Heritage event offering free access to sites that are normally closed to the public or charge admission. The event is being held on 8-11 September. Next year's event will be run by a partnership of the Heritage Alliance, Civic Voice and the National Trust.
www.heritageopendays.org.uk/

MoD confirms funding
The Ministry of Defence has confirmed funding for its sponsored museums. The National Army Museum and Royal Air Force Museum will receive increases of £0.4m and £0.6m respectively over the next four years. The National Museum of the Royal Navy, which consists of the Royal Naval Museum, Fleet Air Arm Museum, Royal Marines Museum and Royal Navy Submarine Museum, will receive £3.8m in 2013-14 (a rise of £0.4m), although this will be cut to £3.2m in 2014-15.

New ACE system criticised
More than 500 arts professionals have sent an open letter to Arts Council England criticising a lack of support for digital art practice within the National Portfolio, the replacement for the Regularly Funded Organisations system.

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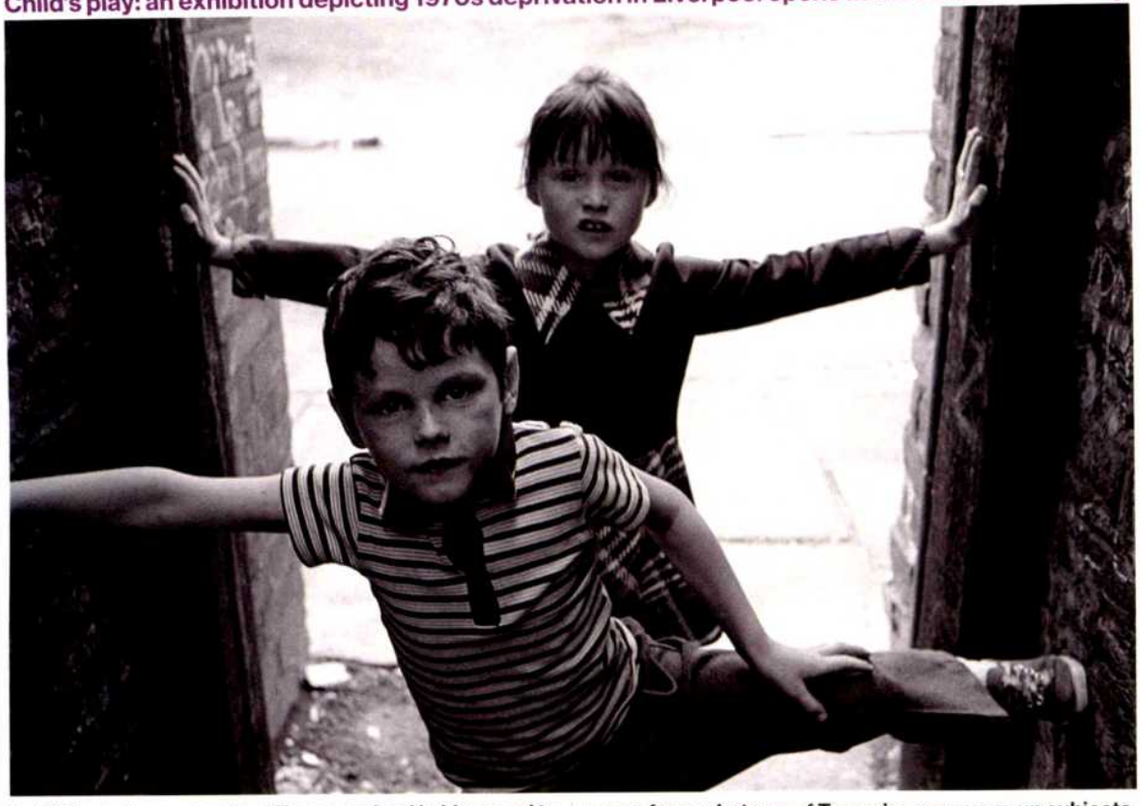
MP has now moved online, with all the practical advice you need and with a vast archive of articles. It publishes monthly on the 15th of each month and is accessible by Museums Association members and MP subscribers, who will need to have registered on the MA website.

www.museumsassociation.org/mp

Child's play: an exhibition depicting 1970s deprivation in Liverpool opens at the Walker Art Gallery



In 1975, photographer Paul Trevor arrived in Liverpool to document inner-city deprivation. The vibrant images he captured of children playing in the terraced streets and high-rise flats feature in the Walker Art Gallery's latest exhibition, Like You've Never Been Away, which takes its name from what one of Trevor's now grown-up subjects said to him when he returned in 2010 to trace the people he had met. The exhibition runs until 25 September. It is part of Look11, Liverpool's first international photography festival, which ends on 26 June.

Nazi-looted art catalogued

Museums and archives create online resource

Geraldine Kendall

A global catalogue of art looted during the Nazi era is to be launched online following collaboration between museums and archive organisations in Europe and the US.

The database will bring together records of stolen objects from international sources, providing the names of victims, perpetrators and artists, digitised images and provenance documents.

Eleven bodies have agreed to merge their archives, including the Commission for Looted Art in Europe (CLAE) and the National Archives. CLAE chairwoman Anne Webber said: "This project is a major step forward in international cooperation to help resolve these long-outstanding issues."

http://go.usa.gov/bwI

MA calls for shake-up in regional funding

MA says core museums model should be axed and funding allocated on basis of public benefit

Geraldine Kendall and Sharon Heal

The Museums Association (MA) has called for a radical new approach to funding regional museums.

In its response to Arts Council England's consultation, the MA argued that the idea of core museums should be dropped, and funding should be distributed on the basis of delivering public benefit.

ACE has been consulting with various sector bodies over the past two months to inform how it will distribute funding to museums from 2012 onwards.

ACE chief executive Alan Davey said the organisation was in the middle of a series of conversations with museums across the country.

Manchester Art Gallery is a hub museum, but its status and funding will change under the new regime

"This is only the beginning of an ongoing conversation with the sector that will help us shape our thinking," he said. "We understand that the sector is keen to know more about funding for 2012-13 as soon as possible."

Davey added that ACE would announce its long-term plans for Renaissance in the autumn and that applications for Renaissance funding for 2012-15 would open in September, with decisions made by the end of the year.

The MA was among the organisations asked for its view. MA director Mark Taylor said the transfer of the responsibility for museums to ACE provided an opportunity for the sector to take stock.

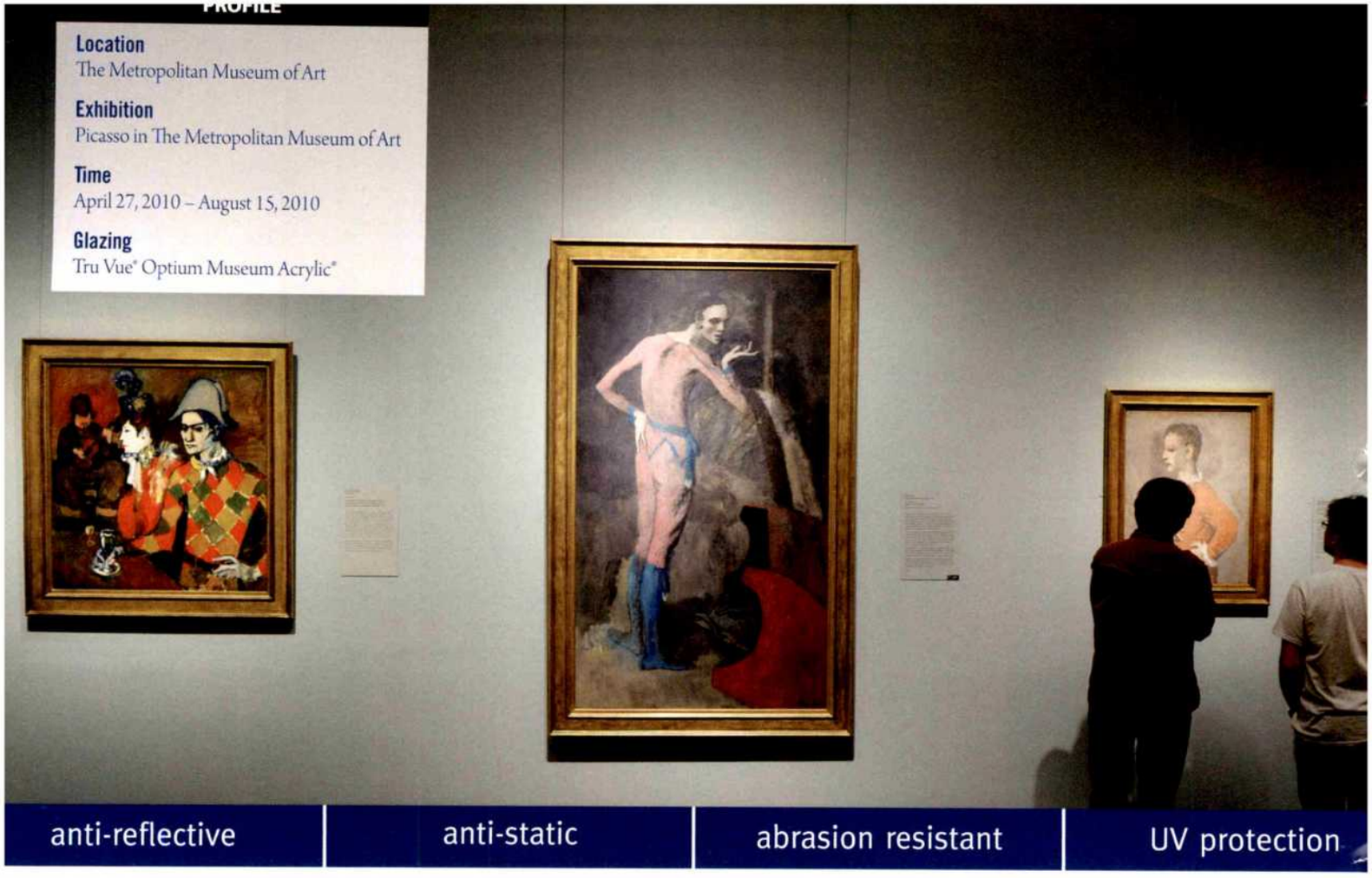
"We've had 10 years of Renaissance funding and it's now time for a new approach to how regional museums in England are funded," he said.

Taylor added that the MA board wanted to see a radical new attitude to funding, based on delivering benefit to the public.

"The MA thinks we should move away from the idea of hubs or core museums, and distribute Renaissance funding more widely to organisations that can prove they are delivering an excellent service to their audiences," he said.

Meanwhile Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA) staff will find out in the coming weeks if their applications to transfer to ACE have been successful. The MLA's 104 staff members were eligible to apply for 53 posts at ACE.

● See www.museumsassociation.org/ace for a full MA response to the ACE consultation



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Pablo Picasso, *At the Lapin Agile*, 1905, The Walter H. and Leonore Annenberg Collection, Gift of Walter H. and Leonore Annenberg, 1992, Bequest of Walter H. Annenberg, 2002 (1992.391); *The Actor*, 1904–05, Gift of Thelma Chrysler Foy, 1952 (52.175); *Saltimbanque in Profile*, 1905, Bequest of Scofield Thayer, 1982 (1984.433.269). All works from The Metropolitan Museum of Art. © 2010 Estate of Pablo Picasso / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York. Photo: Don Pollard.

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Stoke museum latest to introduce admission fees

Budget cuts also necessitate entry charges in Gloucester and Birmingham

Patrick Steel

Cuts monitor

Several local-authority museums are bringing in entry charges following budget cuts.

Stoke-on-Trent City Council plans to charge adults £2.50 to visit the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery from June, unless an experiment seeking voluntary donations proves successful.

Judith Kirk, assistant director for neighbourhood, engagement and partnerships at Stoke, said: "So far, we have raised just over £5,000 [in voluntary donations] in two months and, if that level increases slightly, we would be able to delay charging.

"If it falls, however, we wouldn't be able to budget for running the museum without the additional income from an entrance fee."

The museum's Friends organisation is campaigning against the charge.

Peter Vigurs, a member of the Friends, said: "The longer we can stave off having to do this, the better. We would expect to lose at least 40% of our visitors if the charge comes in."

Adults might soon have to pay to see the Staffordshire Hoard at the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery

As Museums Journal went to press, Bournemouth Borough Council was voting on proposals to introduce a charge at the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery & Museum.

Councillor Philip Stanley Watts said: "Charging is inevitable, but it should be a nominal amount."

Birmingham City Council has already introduced a £4 admission charge at Aston Hall, Blakesley Hall and Soho House, and a £3 charge at Sarehole Mill in Hall Green.

Gloucester City Council has introduced a £3 fee that allows adults entrance to the City Museum and Art Gallery and Gloucester Folk Museum.

The National Maritime Museum in London introduced a £10 charge in March for entrance to the Meridian Line and Flamsteed House galleries around the courtyard.

National Museums Scotland has introduced charges for children over the age of five of £2 at the National Museum of Costume, £3 at the Museum of Rural Life and £4 at the National Museum of Flight.

Meanwhile, a spokeswoman for the Royal Cornwall Museum in Truro, which was considering introducing charges, said the museum would not be charging this year or next, but that it is one of many options for generating income in the future.

The Museums Association is carrying out a survey into the impact of funding cuts on museums across the country. To take part in the survey, please visit: *www.museumsassociation.org/cuts*

National Trust in talks over Clarke Hall

Council to stop funding educational museum

Rebecca Atkinson

Wakefield District Council is in talks with the National Trust (NT) about the future of Clarke Hall educational museum.

The council will support the 17th-century hall until the end of the school summer term. It previously planned to stop funding from 1 April, after the Wakefield Schools Forum decided to withdraw a grant of £242,000.

A council spokeswoman said: "We are exploring all options for the future of Clarke Hall. We have lost the grant from the Wakefield Schools Forum and the council is supporting Clarke Hall until the end of the summer term, so that we can honour school bookings."

An NT spokeswoman said it was not looking to take over the hall's running, although it couldn't rule out a move in the future.

The Grade II-listed hall, which has been used as an education centre since the 1960s, is believed to cost about £300,000 annually to run.

Clarke Hall has been used as an education centre since the 1960s

More than 500 people have joined the Save Clarke Hall Museum Facebook group, while 275 people have signed an e-petition on Wakefield council's website.

The Facebook page states: "As the site delivers unique school visits, Wakefield council must secure its future and prevent a terrible loss to the many schools that include this experience in their curriculum."

Funding news

Adult learning

Museums and galleries can apply for the new £2.25m **Adult and Community Learning Fund**.

The aim of the fund is to support new informal learning opportunities that engage and motivate disadvantaged adults in particular. The maximum for any bid is **£75,000** and the minimum is £10,000. Projects should be ready to start by 1 September and completed by 31 March 2012.

The deadline for the fund, which is provided by the **Skills Funding Agency** and administered by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education, is 10 June. It is open to organisations in England and applications have to be made online.

Meanwhile, **Arts Council England** and the **National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts** are developing a **£500,000** programme to help arts and cultural organisations use digital technologies to engage audiences in fresh ways and to create new business models.

The programme aims to support projects that can be adapted and implemented by other organisations.

In Scotland, 11 projects have received up to £30,000 from **Museums Galleries Scotland's** main grants programme. A total of **£220,000** has been invested, including £20,000 for Argyll & Bute Council to refurbish Campbeltown Museum and £11,881 for Caithness Horizons to develop a permanent exhibition about the Dounreay Nuclear Establishment.

The next deadline for the main grant scheme is 1 October for pre-applications and 20 January 2011 for full applications.
www.niace.org.uk
www.nesta.org.uk
www.museumsgalleriesscotland.org.uk

Simon Stephens

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University museums in Scotland face 25% cuts

Five museums lose a quarter of their core funding for 2011-12

Geraldine Kendall

The Scottish Funding Council (SFC) has cut core funding to university museums by 25% for 2011-12.

The SFC supports five university museums, including Glasgow's Hunterian Museum, which has had its funding cut from £725,000 to £545,000, and the Marischal Museum in Aberdeen, which has been cut from £114,000 to £85,000.

Neil Curtis, chairman of University Museums in Scotland, said it was too early to say what effects the cuts would have, although "it could have been far worse".

"My initial feeling was relief because the equivalent funding for libraries has been cut altogether," said Curtis.

"We are disappointed with the size of the cut, but pleased that the Scottish government recognises the relevance of university museums."

University museum directors in Scotland warned last year that cuts to core funding would be "crippling" and would damage their museums' capability to raise funds from other sources.

The Hunterian Museum has had its funding cut from £725,000 to £545,000

Meanwhile, university museums south of the border face uncertainty as the Higher Education Funding Council for England (Hefce) is unable to make any commitments about core funding from 2012.

Hefce, which faces a 40% cut to its universities budget, distributed £10.45m in core funding to 31 university museums in 2011-12 – 20%-50% of their total budget.

Nick Merriman, chairman of the University Museums Group, said there was a danger that Hefce would seek to get rid of smaller funding streams in the face of cuts.

"It is a small amount for Hefce, but vital for university museums," he said.

"University museums face a potential double whammy because they get much of the rest of their funding from their parent university, which will be dealing with it is own cuts."

Birmingham faces job cuts

Redundancies on cards at museum service

Rebecca Atkinson

Birmingham council has confirmed that a consultation about its museum and art gallery service includes potential job losses, but has denied reports that as many as 30 roles could go.

A council spokesman said the consultation, which is expected to conclude next month, included the potential for redundancies at Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, although no numbers had been confirmed.

Meanwhile, the council is still consulting on whether to merge the museum into a trust with the city's Thinktank science museum in 2012-13.

Last month, Thinktank's chief executive officer, Nick Winterbotham, stood down from his post.

Stewart Dobson has been appointed as acting chief executive of Thinktank.

www.bmag.org.uk

World news digest

Australia: Curators have protested against job losses and state funding cuts at the Canberra-based National Gallery of Australia (NGA) and National Museum. The Community and Public Sector union said at least 10% of jobs at the NGA had been slashed, while cuts at the National Gallery mean that the number of exhibitions held annually will fall from 12 to five. Exhibitions touring to other Australian cities will also be jeopardised, according to the union.

France: Xavier Dectot, a curator at Paris's Musée Cluny (Musée National du Moyen Age), has been named director of the €150m Louvre-Lens satellite, which is to open in December 2012. The 37-year-old is to appoint a management team for the institution, which will borrow objects from the Louvre, rather than having its own collection.

Japan: After the 11 March earthquake, national museums were closed for a week, while several exhibitions have been cancelled. These include 300 Years of French Painting, which was due to be shown at the Yokohama Museum, and Giorgio Morandi at the Toyota Municipal Museum of Art. Inadequate climate control and radiation fears have caused concern for lenders.

Tunisia: The Bardo Museum in Tunis is pressing ahead with a major restoration project following the downfall of the Tunisian president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali in January. The renovation of the museum, which houses the world's largest collection of Roman mosaics, is being funded by a World Bank loan of €12.5m. The project is scheduled for completion by November.

US: About 200 museums enjoyed an increase in attendance last year, in spite of cuts in government and corporate funding, according to a report published by the American Association of Museums. The rise in admissions is mainly down to increased demand from schools and "staycationers". Some survey participants noted that philanthropists have shifted their focus away from museums towards social services.

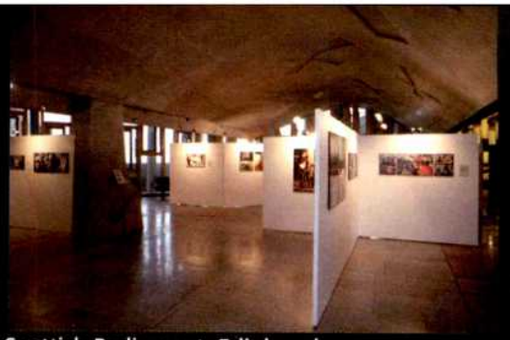
James Cuno is the new chief executive of the J Paul Getty Trust

US: James Cuno, president and Eloise W Martin director of the Art Institute of Chicago since 2004, has been appointed president and chief executive of the Los Angeles-based J Paul Getty Trust. Deborah Marrow, who acted as interim president and chief executive, will resume her position as director of the Getty Foundation following Cuno's arrival in August.

Compiled by Gareth Harris. Seen in the Art Newspaper, Artforum.com, the Australian, STLtoday.com and Agence France-Presse

eeds City Museum

The Cartoon Museum, London



Scottish Parliament, Edinburgh

eeds University

California African American Museum, Los Angeles

Emerging Artist Award, Berlin

luseum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Hamburg

The Chicago Botanical Gardens, Glencoe

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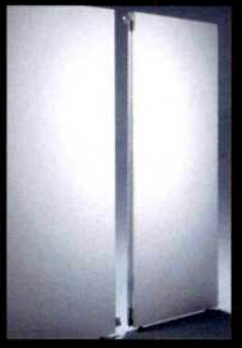

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Increasing disposable income

The financially motivated sale of works from collections is on the rise

Simon Stephens

When the £11m redevelopment of the Watts Gallery in Surrey is unveiled later this month, it will represent a significant milestone in changing attitudes towards selling items from museum collections.

The gallery's finances were rescued when it raised £1.5m by selling two pieces from its collection in 2008. Neither painting was by GF Watts, the 19th-century artist to whom the gallery is devoted.

The case of the Watts was one of the factors that the Museums Association (MA) to amend its code of ethics to allow financially motivated disposal in exceptional circumstances.

A one-day conference held at the National Gallery in London last month, organised by law firm Farrer & Co, attempted to gauge where the sector is in terms of museums and galleries selling items from their collections since the MA's code of ethics was changed in late 2007.

As Art Fund director Stephen Deuchar noted at the conference, disposal is no longer a taboo subject and is a routine part of what museums do. But financially motivated disposal, where objects are sold rather than transferred to another museum for free, is still controversial.

Despite some initial fears, the change to the MA's code of ethics has not led to lots of museums selling items from their collections. But financially motivated disposal is on the rise, and some predict a flood of proposals in the current economic climate, as local authorities start to cash in on museum assets.

One of the museums that asked the MA for advice over a possible sale of works was the Royal Cornwall Museum in Truro. It was a financially motivated disposal as the museum wanted to raise funds to create an endowment. Two works were sold in June 2010 for £2.1m.

The finances of the Watts Gallery, which is reopening this month after a £11m revamp, were improved by its sale of two paintings in 2008

Royal Cornwall Museum director Hilary Bracegirdle says the museum benefited greatly from the rigorous approach it took, which met requirements for financially motivated disposal in the MA's amended code of ethics. It has received more offers of donations than before the sale as it is now regarded as a sustainable organisation that can take care of its collection.

Fears that public confidence in museums would be damaged by a museum selling an item from its collection was one of the main reasons against financially motivated sales. The Royal Cornwall Museum has proved that this does not have to be the case if the process is done rigorously and the public are consulted.

But other worries remain. One is how museums can be sure that the objects they are selling won't become important and valuable in years to come. There is always a tendency to get rid of the unfashionable to acquire the fashionable. And will selling items damage the integrity of a collection as a whole, even if individually they might not appear that important?

Many at the conference argued that, over time, the risk of making mistakes in the sale of works is outweighed by the benefits of buying new items. Part of this relates to curatorial expertise and staff having the confidence to make decisions about what can be sold.

But where does this leave museums, beyond the realisation that it's a complex issue and that proposed sales need to be judged on a case-by-case basis against the MA's code of ethics?

The conference showed there are still grey areas that museums need help on. The MA's disposals toolkit provides some answers, but there is not a great deal on financially motivated sales.

The issue is particularly difficult for local-authority museums where there are no statutory rules about selling items from collections. Staff in local-authority museums can find themselves caught in the middle of rules relating to Accreditation, the MA's code of ethics and the aims of councillors.

There have been calls for clarification on the meaning of the code of ethics wording that says a sale should "significantly improve the long-term public benefit derived from the remaining collection". Does this mean sales can support funding for capital bids? Is trading up allowed, where a museum sells an inferior work so that it can buy a better one?

And who should have responsibility for deciding whether a work should be sold? Should it be the visiting public, non-visiting public, curators, council officers or elected representatives?

Further research in this area is being conducted by the MA. It will appoint a research fellow in the summer to review a range of issues related to the sale of museum collections. The year-long fellowship, which is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Economic and Social Research Council, is expected to start in August.

www.museumsassociation.org/collections/disposal

There will be a session on the ethics of disposal at the MA's annual conference in October www.museumsassociation.org/conference

Selling collections

- Bolton Council is looking to sell 36 paintings, including a Picasso, to raise money to develop a new storage facility.
- The Royal Scottish Academy, in Edinburgh, is selling an LS Lowry, The Hawker's Cart, on 2 June. It will enable the academy to set up an endowment fund to support the work of its collections department and purchase key works by Scottish artists.
- A court will rule in December whether Wedgwood Pension Plan Trustee Ltd is permitted to sell items from the Wedgwood Museum to plug a £125m pension deficit.
- Aberdeenshire council is looking to save £90,000 in 2011-12 and £30,000 in 2012-13 by closing small museums, including Stonehaven's Tolbooth Museum, and transferring or disposing of some of its collections.
- Gloucester City Council recently invited Christie's auction house to value its collections, and has begun a review of its objects.

The rough guide to museum survival

Stuart Davies

Over the next few months museums will be faced with challenging funding decisions. Critical factors determining how successfully they respond will include their relationship with their stakeholders, their ability and willingness to ruthlessly evaluate themselves and their attitude to risk.

Focus on the museum, not on the money. A thorough examination of why the museum exists, what its unique purpose is, what its audience is and could be and how it relates to its main stakeholders, would be a good start.

Analyse activities and ensure that they all contribute to the aspirations of the governing body, the community and the local economy (through tourism, for example). Then the culture of the museum must be clinically analysed. In many museums the main barrier to short-term survival and long-term sustainability is staff attitudes. We all know that there are serious professional and ethical issues to both challenge and protect, but in many places culture change will hold the key to happiness.

Money. Firstly strip out costs. How many people do you need to do the absolute essentials? Reduce management capacity rather than front-of-house or creative people. If the key performance indicator is number of visits, then buy-in marketing expertise. Sweat your assets. Think entrepreneurial.

We must take risks. This means going to uncomfortable places: introducing admission charges; altering opening hours; commercialisation; relying more on volunteers; rationalising collections.

There are some general pointers to survival in times of retrenchment. Try looking at yourself as others see you; especially others who may be able to determine your long-term fate. You may well need external assistance with this. Focus on those things that you can actually do something about.

What sort of strategic actions may be necessary? Get closer to the parent body and align your activities closely to the priorities of stakeholders. Instrumentalism is a well-tested route to survival in a corporate environment. Semi-detached resentment is not a sustainable attitude. The greater the museum's integration into other public services, the greater the protection from not just being cut but being cut adrift completely.

Refocusing the entire museum and all its staff towards income generation might help. This may be professionally unpalatable, but it could make the difference between being still around in five years' time or not. Encourage the business community to get involved in the museum.

Try setting up standing focus groups from the community, with a brief to not just react to what the museum is doing, but gradually have a significant influence over what the museum is planning. This could be done through a number of vehicles, including Friends' groups. It is also an effective way of influencing local democracy.

What needs to exist if any of this is to happen? To me, the most important factor is leadership. A driving force at the head of the museum determined to do what is best for the long term, regardless of short-term risks and disapproval from more reactionary colleagues. And if that does not exist inside the museum, then it has to be brought in from outside. Now is not the time of the faint hearted or the high minded.

Stuart Davies is a consultant, stuartwdavies@btinternet.com
These issues will be debated in the Smarter Museums theme at this year's Museums Association conference in Brighton (3-4 October) www.museumsassociation.org/conference

The diary of a national museum director *Part 13*

Earlier this year, Bullingdon, the minister's special adviser, rang me. "Listen, Looby-Loo," he said, using my old Oxford nickname, "Jeremy's saved too many millions by cutting cash for the little museums. The nationals have so much public money they are choking on it. Give me an idea, quick."

As director of the National Museum of British History, it is my job to chronicle the defining events of contemporary Britain. Doing exhibitions is a bit tricksy without a building, staff or collections, but it doesn't stop me having good ideas.

So to honour the Royal Wedding, with £1m from DCMS, I decided to give 10 of our Great Artists £100,000 each to "create tasteful and respectful works that celebrate England's love of the monarchy, suitable for reproduction and sale in museums".

I was disappointed by the results. Tracey Emin painted a naked cardboard Prince Harry and laid it out on her famous bed. Damien Hirst created a life-sized Prince William, and sliced him from head to crotch and suspended him in formaldehyde.

Gilbert and George created a bank note showing police kettling and killing protestors at a demonstration in London. And Steve Bell designed a mug illustrating Prince Charles as St George, being slaughtered by a Welsh dragon.

I had to stop the project, but it was all the more galling that a national museum in the north stepped in to display the works, and the limited editions flew out of its shop, raising far more than £1m.

One good thing came out of this debacle. I managed, at the last minute, to have Bullingdon take the director of the museum off the list of names recommended for a knighthood in this year's honours.

How museums can support Ai Weiwei

Tristram Besterman

Whether or not they visited his Sunflower Seeds installation at Tate Modern, London, few people in the UK are unaware of the peremptory detention by the Chinese authorities of the internationally acclaimed artist and political activist, Ai Weiwei.

Detained without charge since April and with his whereabouts uncertain, the chorus of condemnation has been sustained and worldwide. Fellow artists, cultural institutions and the media have kept his disappearance in the headlines.

Museums across the globe have lent their names to an online petition calling for the artist's release. In May, Anish Kapoor dedicated to Ai his work Leviathan when it opened in Paris, and called on museums and galleries worldwide to close for one day in protest. Ai's absence from the subsequent opening of two exhibitions of his work in London further highlighted the artist's unlawful treatment at the hands of the Chinese authorities.

So, how should other museums react when a much-exhibited individual is silenced by a paranoid regime that fears him for the very principles of openness and accountability that he champions? Is the systematic abuse of human rights by a foreign power the legitimate concern of museums (and how can it not be if you do business with China)? Where is the line drawn between the polemical and the political and why does that matter when a museum crosses it? When does constructive engagement become cultural appeasement? Given the negative reaction of the Chinese authorities to external "interference", is pressure from overseas counterproductive?

The British government is playing it long in investing in its relationship with the world's emerging economic super-power. Toeing the business-as-usual line, the British Council warns against cultural boycotts, and advocates dialogue as "better than isolation".

Making common cause to protest publicly against the detention of Ai is a matter for individual museums to decide. Following Tate's principled lead, I'm sure that the Victoria and Albert Museum and the British Museum trustees will be thinking hard about their participation in the UK Now exhibition that opens next year in China.

Socially-engaged museums cannot be apolitical, and playing the cultural diplomacy card ups the ante. Museums may or may not feel connected to unfolding events in China. At least they are free to wield such influence as they have in a manner that echoes, however modestly, the courageous stand taken by Ai Weiwei himself. In his name museums can and should hold China to account.

Tristram Besterman is a freelance adviser and writer on museums and culture.
www.change.org/petitions/call-for-the-release-of-ai-weiwei

The insider

Praise to the museum of unhappiness

Maev Kennedy

Plans for our new annex, the Museum of Unhappiness, are coming along nicely.

Subject to some fine tuning, this is how we anticipate it will work. Once through the interactive entrance porch, triggering the sound of an ice cream van disappearing into the distance, our visitors will be greeted by a "researcher" – obviously we can't afford real researchers, but the marketing students have offered to help out again – equipped with clipboard, swab kit and fingerprint pad.

Visitors will be invited to respond to a few simple questions (purpose of visit/real purpose of visit/current socio-economic status/anticipated socio-economic status next year) before offering them our more detailed 56-page questionnaire to complete.

At the reception desk they will be offered a range of attractive concessions, including discounts for: local residents on producing two utility bills and the title deeds to their property or in the case of non-householders an up-to-date rent book; for those aged over 85 but no longer in full time employment; for those aged under three still in full-time education; and a voucher entitling them to a half-price biscuit in the cafe in return for a till receipt showing they have purchased not less than a pack of miniature coloured pencils and a scented eraser in the shape of an albatross from the gift shop.

The visitors will pass an array of closed doors colourfully labelled "gallery under re-arrangement" before coming to the shop ("closed for stock taking") and the cafe ("closed for special function") before proceeding past the washrooms ("cleaning by unfriendly male/female attendant in progress") to the rear exit.

Visitors will then be led through the equestrian and gladiatorial display arena ("closed due to staff shortages") back to our main front door. It is expected that satisfaction levels for our traditional displays will show a marked improvement among visitors who have previously experienced the annex – even if we are compelled to keep "Simply Topping – milk bottle caps through the ages, one collector's private passion" on for another six months.

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Should we be working on better networks?

Sally MacDonald

At a time when the museum world is undergoing seismic shifts, we need to question the role of professional networks within our sector.

A survey of Museums Association (MA) members last year showed that they typically belonged to up to four other professional organisations.

Most of us would opt for quality over quantity, so it is worth asking whether this plethora of specialist organisations represents the best way to operate. Could we, as a profession, be better networked?

Anyone interested in the nature and potential of networks should read Network Logic, a set of essays published by Demos in 2004 . It argues that while the current interest in networks is shaped by the revolution in digital communications, networks have always been essential to animal and human life.

Social networks vary, but they have certain common characteristics: they are self-organising; tend to lack logic or hierarchies; are built on trust; develop in response to need and morph rapidly. The authors argue that many professional networks – they cite the boom in "new girl" networks since the 1980s – effectively undercut traditional power bases and structures.

Many of the networks in our sector have felt radical at times and clearly all of them answer some need. MA members cited all kinds of reasons for belonging to networks, from keeping up with research to contact with peers. The ideal professional network would probably combine the warmth of a large party of friends, the support of the Samaritans and the social advantage of the masons.

We need our networks for a sense of identity and belonging and for survival.

But do we need so many? And could we use them better? The Demos authors argue that if we understood the nature of networks better, we could use them more effectively for collective action and peer learning. If our network memberships were more diverse, they could be stronger and more innovative.

The Turning Point Network , established by Arts Council England in 2006, is an interesting model. Based on a commitment to collaboration and collective action to strengthen the visual arts sector, it links more than 2,000 artists, arts organisations and arts professionals through 11 regional steering groups, each determining regional programmes, with working groups addressing national issues. Should something similar exist for museums, perhaps led by the MA? Should some of our existing networks merge? It feels as though it may be time for change.

Sally MacDonald is the director of UCL museums and collections. She is also coordinating the Get Connected theme at this year's Museums Association annual conference in Brighton (3-4 October)
www.museums association.org/conference

From where I'm standing

Petrie exhibition stops short of answering question

Felicity Heywood

I found it refreshing that the curator of the temporary exhibition Typecast (to 22 December) at the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology at the University College London was brave enough to reveal herself within the interpretation of the exhibition.

I'm sure many curators are baulking at this, but as Debbie Challis says on the first of 15 panels, "... who I am informs this exhibition". What she is saying to visitors is that this isn't the truth but a version of it.

The exhibition takes place one hundred years after the death of Francis Galton, the man who gave us eugenics, and focuses on identity: of the ancient Egyptians, those of Petrie and Galton, and on the fact that how we see ourselves shapes our response to history.

But the bulk of the exhibition skirts around the issue of the ancient Egyptians being Africans. Instead it talks in multi-cultural, multi-ethnic terms. It is a fact that most museums are fearful of going there. (The Fitzwilliam in Cambridge is leading the way and taking quiet steps to show historical Egypt as African.)

I am pleased by the Petrie's future plans to challenge how Egyptology has become Europeanised – a kind of accepted part of European culture. This was exemplified on my visit when three European visitors were loudly discussing the tomb of a Pharaoh and in which museums certain objects are held. The conversation was so heartfelt, it sounded like they were discussing something inherent to their way of life.

The exhibition will be using some of the comments it receives to change content. This could be a good thing if well selected. On the feedback board there was a comment that the curator should not refer to whites as Caucasian as this was offensive.

I didn't know whether this was meant tongue in cheek but another visitor took it seriously responding that they should "get over it" and that European wasn't a technically correct term. I wasn't aware that such discussions were exercising the white (probably safest to use here) community. This could be an interesting debate to draw out alongside the Galton exhibition.

Use of unpaid internships in museums continues to provoke debate

A Museums Association poll that revealed more than 70% of respondents thought that unpaid internships were exploitative sparked a flurry of comments on the MA's website (*Museums Journal May 2011, p4*). We reprint a selection of views here.

David Cameron has made it clear he is "cool" with using connections to help family and friends! I feel deeply uncomfortable with this sentiment and don't feel it is right for institutions to use their status to get people to work for free. At a time when we should be trying to diversify the workforce in museums to keep them relevant to the communities they serve, this can only damage this aspiration because of the fact that the only ones who can benefit from these internships are those who can afford it!
David

I work in Austria and the situation here is quite different. We would like to invite two student interns to work over the summer months for six-week periods each, 10-15 hours per week. However, unpaid work of any kind is mostly prohibited (only "job shadowing" is ok!).

I think this rule is unfair because it prevents motivated young professionals from getting ahead and obtaining valuable experience. That said, the number of unpaid hours permitted each week should be government regulated. For example, up to 40 hours for the first eight weeks and then up to 20 hours thereafter. Employers should not be able to "hire" an intern for more than six months without pay.
Holly

I have got several unpaid internships with my skills and not connections. Nevertheless I felt used. I learned amazing practical skills but I did so much more than the paid employees.

I was glad to gain the experience but I lost a lot of money and struggled to support myself while having a full-time internship.

It is completely unfair that museums do this. I want to learn but at what cost can I gain knowledge in the field?
Jessica

The trouble with unpaid internships is not so much that they exploit the labour of the intern, but that they maintain an unfair system.

Those not fortunate enough to have the means to support themselves while working for free, often doing long hours, are discriminated against in a job market where getting the all-important work experience depends on working without pay.

This flies in the face of all the noble speeches about how museums should be inclusive and representative, and how important it is to have a varied workforce. No diversity programme in the world is going to give us that if at the same time the job market is skewed to favour those who can afford to do an unpaid internship.

Or could it be that certain museums only wish to employ people who uphold middle-class values, and offering full-time unpaid internships is a convenient way of filtering out "the wrong sort"?
Anonymous

Join the debate: http://bit.ly/isSUgs

Hard-nosed fact

In the discussions about axing purchase funds for museums and galleries and the question of acquisitions, I do not think enough emphasis has been laid on the sheer monetary advantage acquisitions can bring to a city and its museums.

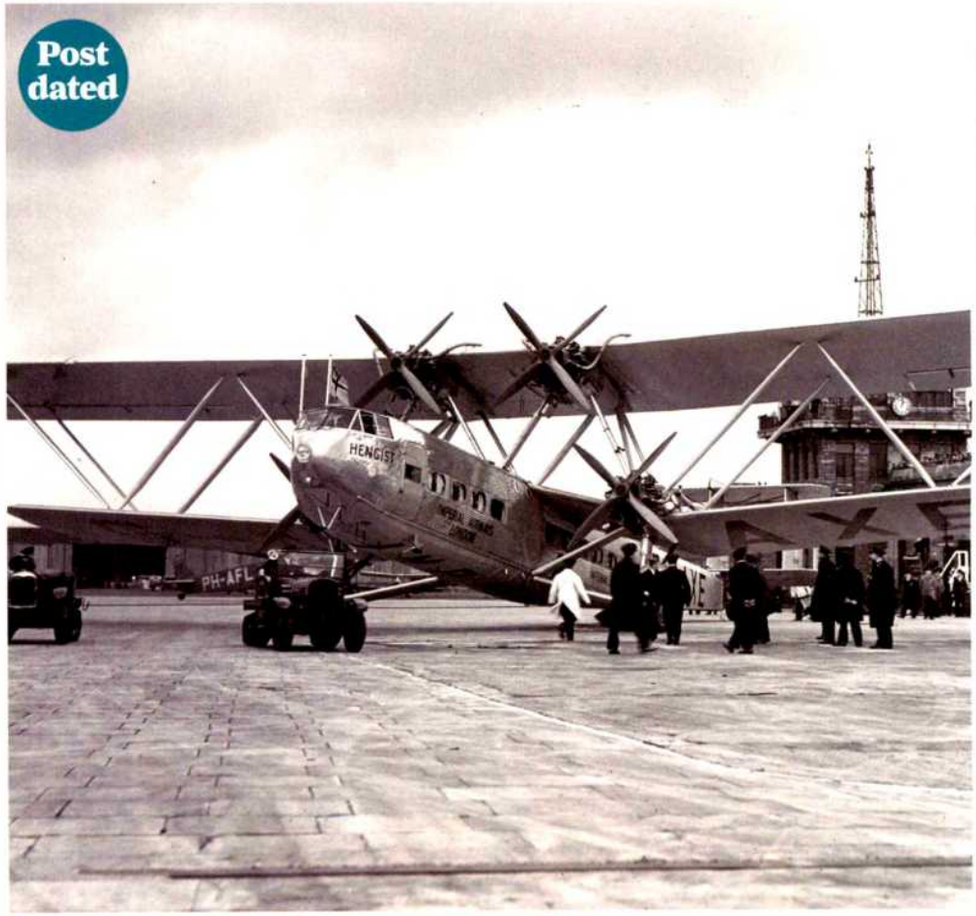
With a small acquisitions fund and judicious use of grant funding from various sources, including Friends' organisations, during my almost 20 years as director of Bristol Art Gallery I acquired paintings that now exceed by far in value the total salary I received over all those years. And this is, of course, true for many museums and galleries and their staff. This is the hard-nosed argument to a committee.
Arnold Wilson, former director of Bristol Art Gallery, Bath

Cold comfort

Many members will doubtless have seen the recent BBC2 television programme, The Secrets of Scott, in which explorer Ben Fogle travelled "somewhere in the Antarctic" to visit the semi-permanent base camp established by Robert Scott prior to his attempt to reach the South Pole in 1911.

The hut is still standing and contains 10,000 original artefacts, "frozen in time",

Post dated



Tractors tow the first Australian airmail plane onto the runway in 1934

ROYAL MAIL GROUP LTD (RMMA) 2011

as one magazine chose to put it. It is undergoing a conservation programme that will take four years at a cost of around £6m.

It is a moot point whether the project impinges on the museum world – can Scott's hut be regarded as a form of site museum? It hardly fits into the definition of one: access is limited and there is no interpretation.

Why remove precious objects for conservation in a carefully controlled environment, only to return them to the same environment that was the cause of them requiring conservation in the first place? For whose benefit is this being done?
Graeme Cruickshank, AMA, FMA, Edinburgh

Don't cut development

Everyone says that one of the first things to go when there are cuts is the training budget.

Some recent work that I carried out for the Museums Association (MA) into the future of sharing collections knowledge painted a bleak picture of stretched staff having little time to develop themselves, or even leave the office to meet colleagues or attend training. This is a huge shame given the investment there has been over the last few years to develop people working in the sector.

At the moment it's hard to know what the future holds for workforce development: we don't yet know what the priorities are going to be for Renaissance or Arts Council England (ACE), or to what extent the Heritage Lottery Fund's (HLF) support for workforce development might change.

It is timely then that the future development of the workforce is going to be the subject of a one-day conference in July. It should give people the opportunity to hear from ACE, HLF, the MA and others about where they see the focus for workforce development being in the future. Let's hope the event shows that people are still committed to this area of work.
Caitlin Griffiths, museum and heritage consultant
The event is on 4 July at Nottingham Contemporary: www.mla.gov.uk/what/events/Building_Connections

In the July/August issue of Museums Journal

- **Are spending cuts threatening innovative archaeological displays?**
- **Seaside stories; what role do museums have in the renaissance of costal resorts?**
- **Objects under canvas; on the festival trail with museums**
- **Reviews: All About Us, At-Bristol; Cardiff Story; Turner Contemporary, Margate; Stirling Castle**
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www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal

Museum Practice online

- **The latest issue of Museum Practice explores why knowledge sharing and succession planning are vital areas of work and how they can be built into an organisation's overall ethos. Includes case studies on using written guides, mentoring and unlocking databases.**

www.museumpractice.org

Vox pop

What role should the NMDC play in the UK museum sector?

Mark Taylor *director, Museums Association*

"The National Museum Directors' Conference (NMDC) has been an eccentric beast ever since it brought a handful of non-national museums into membership with no discernible logic behind the decision.

Its reputation is diminished as people and politicians alike are confused about what it stands for and it is very welcome that it is looking afresh at its membership and remit.

The sector needs national museums; it needs their profile, their clout and their expertise. All museums need to share messages and values and yet at the same time, different types of museums must stand up for their particular interests and concerns.

With its 6000+ members, the Museums Association speaks for the whole sector and NMDC should concentrate on doing what it says on its tin."

John Roles *head of museums and galleries, Leeds City Council*

"In a period of great uncertainty a strong voice for museums is critical. The demise of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and the hubs has left a vacuum.

NMDC is one of few bodies with the potential clout to advocate for the wider museum sector. But there is a tension between this wider sector role and the specific advocacy for the interests of its members.

NMDC can appear as a self-selecting club and if it is going to perform a wider role it needs to reassess its purpose, name and membership. The museum sector encompasses more than simply the nationals. If NMDC were to broaden its membership by including say the potential Core Museums that would be a start but would change the nature of the beast substantially."

Matthew Tanner *director, ss Great Britain, vice chairman, Association of Independent Museums*

"NMDC wonders if it should be 'leading and setting the museum and cultural agenda'.

The Association of Independent Museums represents over 900 members across the UK. Some have "national" in their title, although they do not receive DCMS largesse.

Although national museums have developed some good partnerships, NMDC, restricted as it is to the experience of a small group of very singular museums, does not have the knowledge or experience of other types of museums that would enable it to take on these roles credibly.

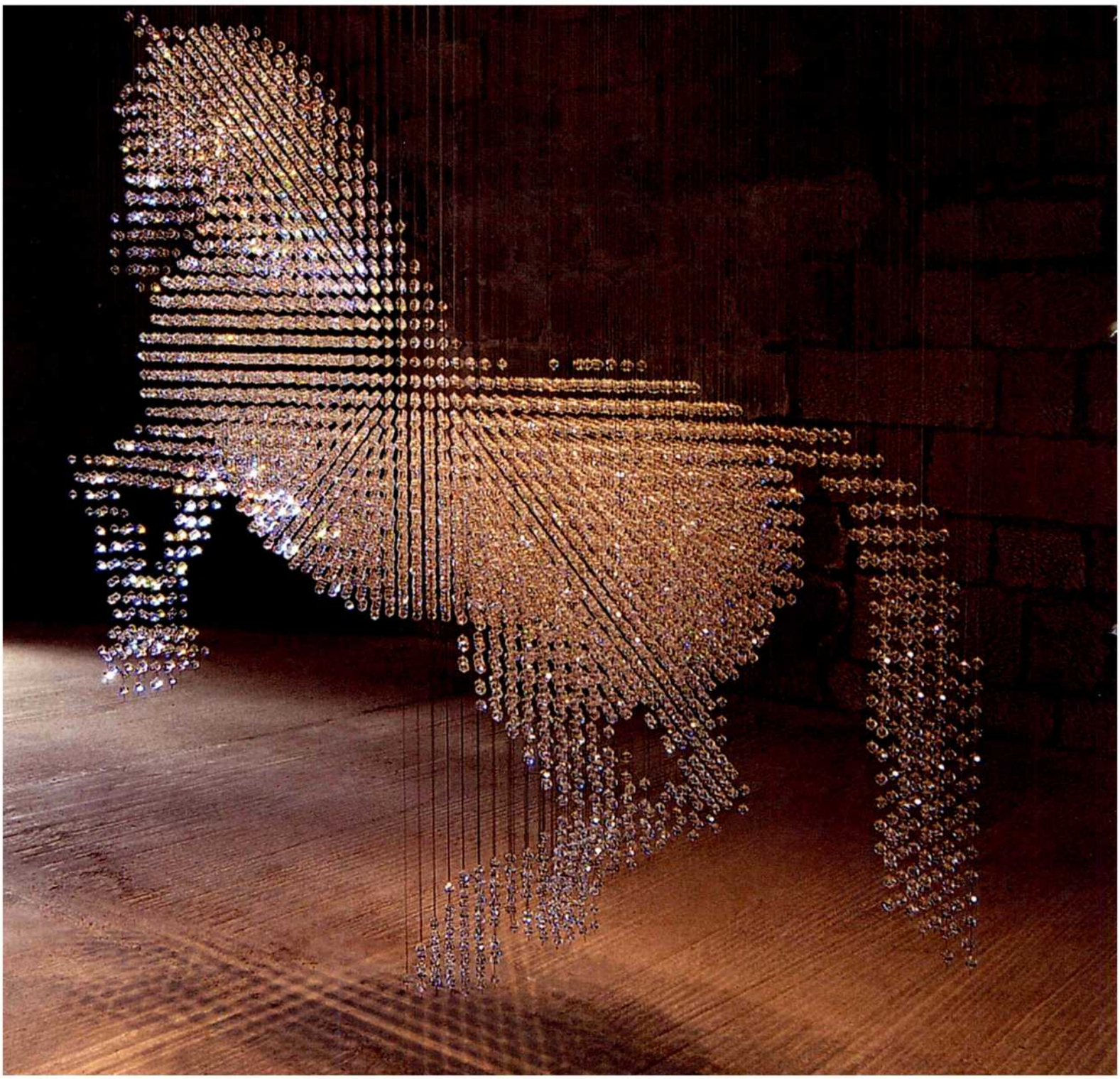
The strength of NMDC is what it is now – a respected voice for a clearly defined small group of museums that are funded by national government. Respectful collaboration is what is needed."

Chris Bailey *director, Northern Ireland Museums Council*

"Among the most significant contributions the NMDC has made to the sector of late have been the solid evidence base it has amassed and the effective use to which this has been put for advocacy purposes.

Given the recent seismic shifts in the museum landscape recently, its role as advocate could be expanded with effect and strengthened through more demonstrable partnerships with the regional, local and voluntary/independent museums.

In Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Museums Council is leading by example on this. Nothing new, one might say, but being seen to do more 'joined-up', collaborative work would do the NMDC and all of us the world of good."



Presenting contemporary art in rural areas is challenging but can lead to innovative work and strong connections with audiences, writes *Simon Stephens*

Remote working

Allenheads in the remote Northumbrian countryside was described in the press as a dying village in the 1980s because it was isolated and the mining industry that once supported it no longer existed.

But salvation arrived in the unlikely form of contemporary art when Helen Ratcliffe and Alan Smith moved into the village in the mid-1990s. After working in the arts in the US, the couple wanted to find a rural location that could act as their home but also as a venue to support artists.

"In the beginning we weren't looking at other models, we were propelled by our own convictions," says Ratcliffe. "We had no funding or backing but had a little bit of that American optimism that you can do anything."

Allenheads, the highest village in England, had an aging female population and under 200 residents: it did not seem the most promising location for an arts initiative. But Ratcliffe and Smith moved into the old school house after an 18-month redevelopment programme and Allenheads Contemporary Arts (ACA) was born.

The mid-1990s was a time when a number of other organisations and individuals were developing contemporary art projects in rural locations.

Also in Northumberland, the English Heritage property Belsay Hall staged its first contemporary art exhibition in 1996. At the other end of England, in Hampshire, ArtSway opened a white cube space in the village of Sway in 1997.

In Scotland, Deveron Arts was formed in 1995 by Claudia Zeiske and two others in Huntly, a town of 2,000 people in the Aberdeenshire countryside.

All of these organisations were developing their own ways of working and facing similar challenges of securing funding, developing audiences and attracting artists. ▶

© ENGLISH HERITAGE. KEITH PAISLEY (HORSE). ACA/KATE STOBBART (RABBIT)

Left: Lucky Spot, Stella McCartney's crystal horse, part of English Heritage's programme to bring contemporary art, fashion and design to Belsay Hall in north-east England. Right: Kate Stobbart's Peter Rabbit, which featured in an exploration of nostalgia at Allenheads Contemporary Arts, which is based in a remote village in Northumberland

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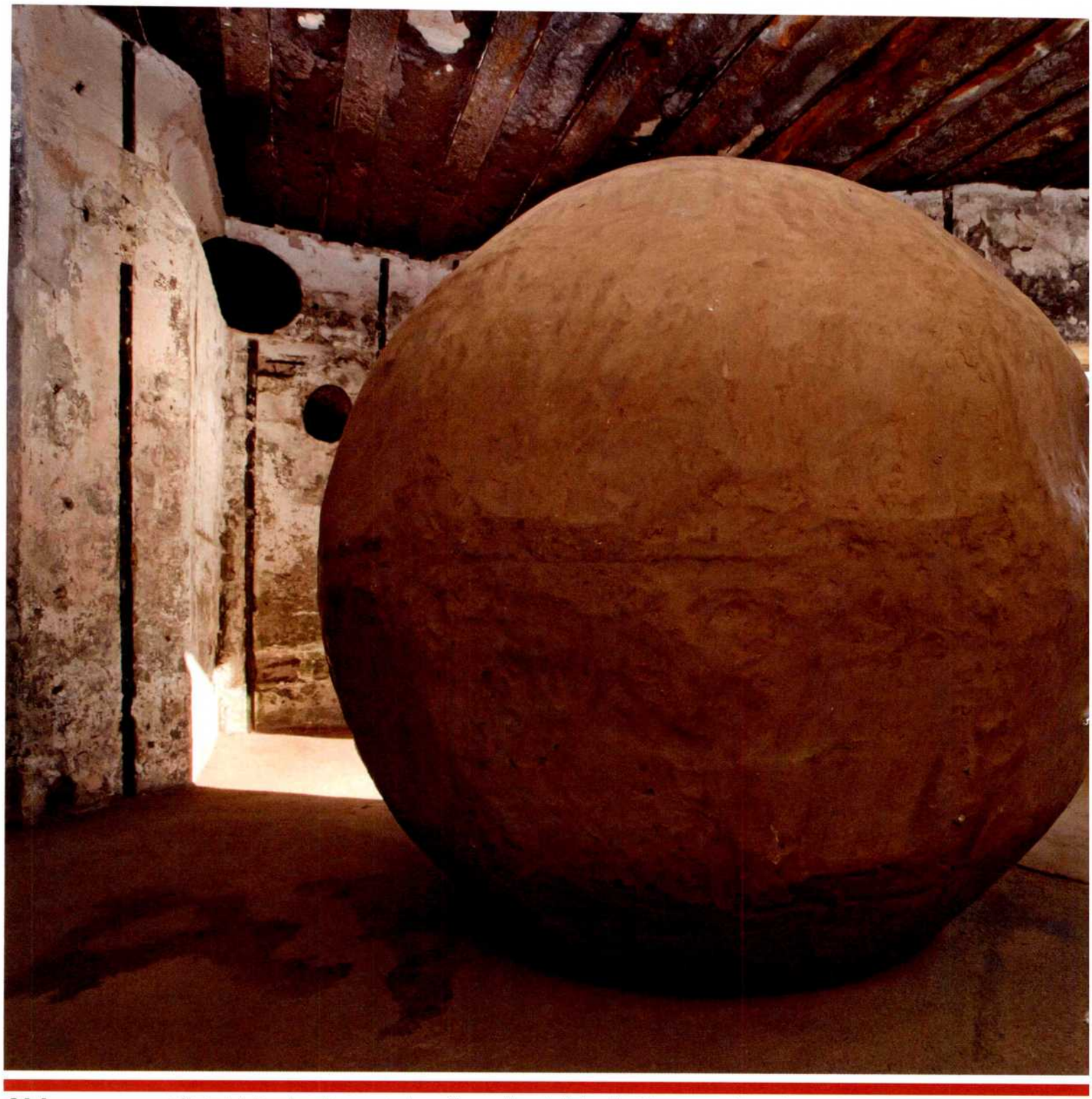


Alderney Stones

The installation of sculptor Andy Goldsworthy's stones have been described as the worst thing to happen on Alderney since the German occupation during world war two, but for most residents they are allowing locals and tourists alike to see the island in new and interesting ways.

The 11 Alderney Stones are made of compacted clay and each one, apart from the one in the bunker (above), contain material found on the island, such as rope, berries, seeds, old tools and discarded gloves. These will gradually be revealed as the stones decay. On and off, Goldsworthy has spent two and a half years on the project, which was unveiled in April.

Alderney Museum is acting as the hub for the project by putting it into context and giving visitors a more rounded view of the art and the island. The museum's curator, Francis Jeens, says the project has met with some resistance from a few residents: "People are really protective of the island, which is a good thing, but they are suspicious of outsiders." Goldsworthy gave public talks on Alderney in 2009 and 2010 to help residents understand the project. All involved felt it was important that the initiative should embrace the island rather than be imposed.

The driving force behind Alderney Stones is Eric Snell, who is the founding director of Art and Islands, which is developing a series of contemporary art projects on Alderney, Sark, Herm and Guernsey. An Antony Gormley

sculpture has already been sited on Herm, and Snell is currently discussing future projects with Cai Guo-Qiang and Cornelia Parker.

Snell is convinced of the benefits contemporary art can

© CHRIS GEORGE PHOTOGRAPHY (GOLDSWORTHY IMAGES)

Alderney Stones, a project by sculptor Andy Goldsworthy (pictured below), was met with initial suspicion by some islanders

bring to remote islands such as Alderney and Sark.

"Art and Islands is the complete antithesis to the city-centric white-walled gallery space," says Snell. "Not that I have anything against city-based galleries, but I believe that there is another way to look at and engage with art. Art and Islands is more about art and less about the art world."

Snell says the involvement of Alderney Museum and the many residents has been vital.

"Art and Islands is not about hiding art away in buildings, it is about interacting with the community, being part of the community, giving the community ownership – but that's not always easy. Small communities like Alderney are often resistant to change. For some reason they think they don't understand 'modern' art, they think it's not for them. These are the kind of barriers that I am looking to break down."

www.artandislands.com
www.alderneystones.com

"It took a while because in the first years, the arts council, in fact nobody, was taking us seriously," says Smith. "Nobody wanted to touch us and even now there is an urban-centric head-set among most of the funding bodies. They struggle with anything rural unless it is something perhaps small scale or middle of the road."

But ACA has secured a range of funding over the years. Its first substantial support came from the Rural Development Commission and funded a series of children's workshops. And in 2000 Northern Arts gave it funding for Year of the Artist residencies. It has hosted many residencies and worked with artists such as Marcus Coates and James Turrell. ACA has also formed partnerships with higher education bodies to support arts students.

Belsay Hall's first contemporary show saw the main hall refurnished with 15 pieces of commissioned contemporary design. Its most recent exhibition was Extraordinary Measures in 2010, which featured artists including Ron Mueck, Mat Collishaw and Mariele Neudecker.

"When I began in 1996 it was quite difficult to get artists to take part as it was in rural Northumberland," says Judith King, curator of the contemporary art programme at Belsay Hall. "A lot of artists from London were quite quizzical about where it was and if it would be useful to their careers. But it has been progressively easier to invite artists, designers and fashion designers."

Culture is not just urban

Even with funding in place and artists on board, organisers of contemporary art events in rural areas still have to persuade people to visit.

"Bringing high-quality art to this sort of environment is challenging and getting the audiences is challenging as well," says ArtSway director Mark Segal. ArtSway has been made all too aware of the difficulty of funding contemporary art in rural areas as it was one those that recently failed to get regular support through Arts Council England national portfolio status (see p27).

"The numbers [of visitors] were an issue for us," says Segal. "Despite doing a lot of work to develop audiences, that has not always been successful."

In the light of all the challenges of developing contemporary art in rural areas, why do it at all? Wouldn't it be more straightforward just to stick to urban areas where many artists and audiences are based?

The simple response from those involved is that contemporary culture does not just belong to urban centres and therefore should not just take place in urban areas.

Grizedale Arts in the Lake District has its roots in a series of residencies that started in the 1970s and included artists such as David Nash, Richard Harris and Andy Goldsworthy creating a range of work in the forest. Its director, Adam Sutherland, says the idea that culture belongs to urban centres stems from the view that all rural locations are simply a backwater for recreation and bigotry.

But Sutherland says attitudes have changed in recent years, as has Grizedale itself, which has moved away from artists who have highlighted the beauty of nature to a programme that has asked artists to address some of the challenges affecting rural areas, such as tourism, and to come up with solutions that make sense to local inhabitants.

"One of the key shifts that has happened in the last few years is that the rural has started to be considered as a viable base for making contemporary art," Sutherland says. "This shift has been brought about in part by rural British residency projects like Grizedale Arts, Wysing Arts Centre, Deveron Arts, Cove Park and ArtSway." ▶

Left: artist Flora Parrott used the collections of Yorkshire's Ryedale Folk Museum to examine debates about contemporary art. Right: The Utopia Group and residents of Huntly, Aberdeenshire, perform The Palace of Puzzle, a celebration of local Victorian Sinologist James Legge. Below right: Hew Locke's Starchitect installation at ArtSway in the New Forest, Hampshire

Funding art in rural areas

For those presenting contemporary art in rural areas, a key way that they make it relevant to their audiences is by working closely with local communities. ACA says its events are part of the way the village socialises.

"It did not take too much time to realise that we needed to make people comfortable, so we put in barrels of beer and pots of soup at our events," says Smith "There is a very diverse audience at our events – there will be a dry-stone waller, a farmer, a dentist who commutes to the city, teachers, a lawyer, the whole mix, really."

Deveron Arts is similarly inclusive, with Huntly residents being an integral part in creating projects. Claudia Zeiske says Deveron uses what she calls a 50/50 approach, which runs through all levels of a project, including the equal contribution residents and artists make.

Artists outside their safety zone

"Rather than a passive audience, the public we are concerned with becomes a participant or collaborator, shaping the project in many different ways than the ones prescribed by the artist," says Zeiske.

Local residents are further drawn in by the fact that Deveron Arts does not have a dedicated venue. Spaces throughout Huntly are used, which Zeiske says helps to attract people who would not visit traditional galleries.

The ability of contemporary art to attract new audiences is also its appeal to rural venues with dedicated arts spaces. Ryedale Folk Museum, in Hutton-Le-Hole on the remote North Yorkshire moors, opened a small gallery space at the museum and has developed a range of contemporary art projects to be shown there.

A recent residency by the artist Flora Parrott was part of three exhibitions exploring the debates and practices surrounding modern and contemporary sculpture in a rural context. Parrott, who is based in London but whose family live on the North Yorkshire moors, used the museum's collections to explore the social, historical and artistic resonances of a small section of the moor.

The first exhibition in the series was in 2008 and saw a group of young curators select contemporary sculpture from the Arts Council Collection. Next month, Herbert Read: Yorkshire Modern will highlight the art critic's connection with the region and his role in the development of British modernism.

"One of the key targets for the gallery was to engage and build new audiences," says Andy Dalton, the museum's gallery manager. "The museum was conscious that its function as a social history museum meant more than just preserving the past."

Like others working in contemporary rural arts, Dalton is keen for artists to be radical, innovative and ambitious, and to produce work that challenges visitors.

"It would be easy to spoonfeed our visitors a nostalgic experience but we hope that they enjoy the fact that at the museum they will get a sense of place in all its aspects, traditional and contemporary."

Segal at ArtSway says some visitors are challenged when they come face to face with contemporary works rather than traditional images of rural life.

"Some people do walk in and say: 'Where is the picture of the pony on the wall?'" says Segal. "Occasionally there is that unexpectedness, but this is a good thing, as their pre-conceived ideas of what the rural world should be like have been completely thrown out of the window and they come and experience something entirely different."

If contemporary art in rural locations challenges audiences, the environment also challenges artists. Many artists, protected by their small art world bubbles, find this difficult.

Smith at ACA believes that the direct contact artists have with local communities is vital: "Frequently, our artists here are educated by the local population of non-art audiences. That is where the bigger impact lies really, because the artists are actually being asked questions and confronted with things that they would not normally be confronted by among their safe art audiences."

The sculptor Andy Goldsworthy has just completed a project on the Channel island of Alderney, where he has installed 11 two-and-a-half ton stones that will gradually decay and reveal objects hidden inside (see p24). Working on a relatively small island that can be walked around in a day involved frequent contact with members of the 2,500-strong population.

Goldsworthy says: "I love working in museums and private collections but this is what I need to do as an artist; put myself out there in public spaces. Island culture is quite tough, so if you are an artist making this work, you are not going to get an easy ride. It is good for me."

PHOTOGRAPHY: ANTHONY SHRAG (UTOPIA GROUP)

The 54th Venice Art Biennale starts this month and among those taking part is ArtSway, a contemporary art gallery based in the New Forest village of Sway.

Director Mark Segal could be forgiven for seeing the irony of his gallery's presence at Venice, since he only recently found out that ArtSway would not be given financial support under Arts Council England's (ACE) national portfolio system, the replacement for Regularly Funded Organisation (RFO) funding.

"We are doing a major project in Venice and the funding just drops off a cliff, so it feels quite perverse," says Segal.

Presumably ArtSway was one of the cases that Visual Arts and Galleries Association director Hilary Gresty was referring to when she said ACE had made some "odd decisions in rural areas" when it announced the national portfolio winners and losers in late March. Smiths Row in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, also lost out.

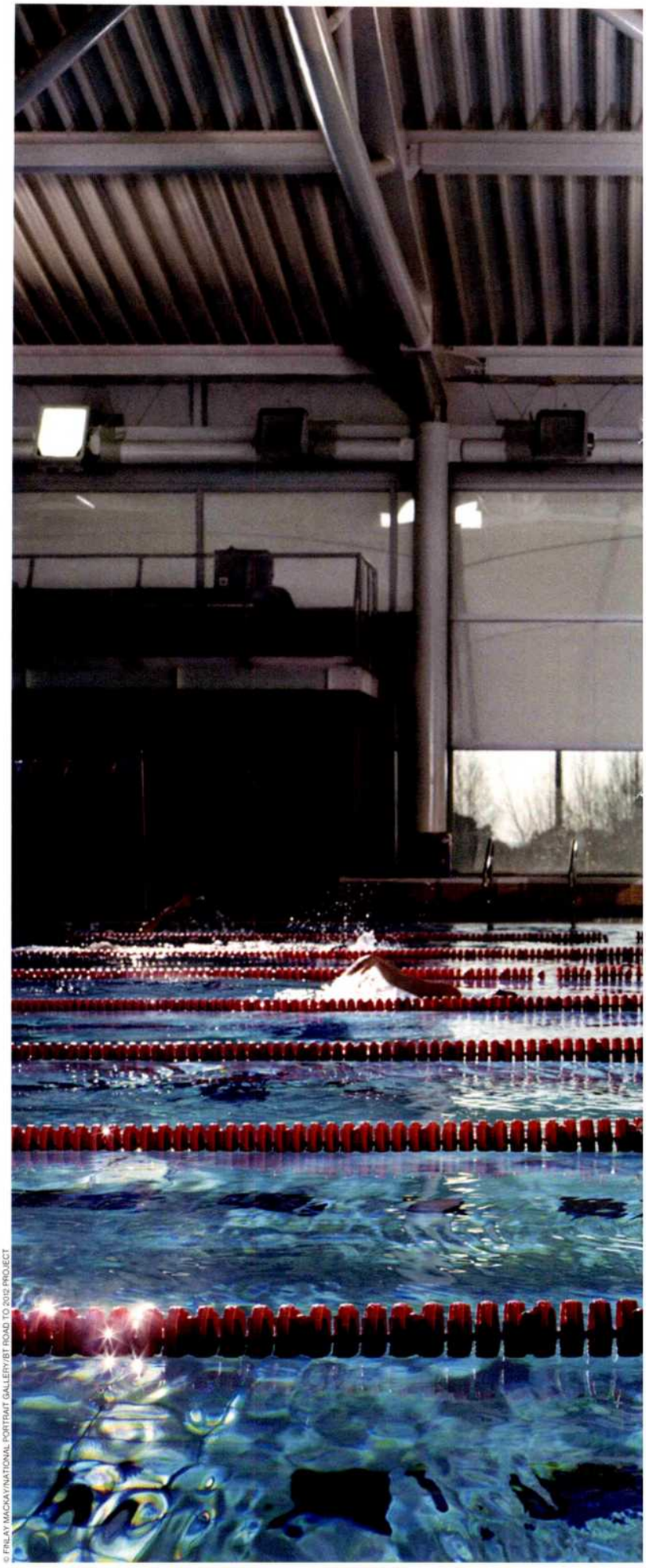
Not all rural contemporary arts organisations fared badly. Grizedale Arts in the Lake District and Stour Valley Arts, which both had RFO status, got uplifts.

And after many years presenting work in King's Forest, Stour Valley Arts has just opened its own venue in Ashford. Director Sandra Drew says this will allow it to access more funding streams from sources such as the local authority.

Like their urban peers, many rural arts organisations tap into a range of funding sources. Deveron Arts, based in the small Aberdeenshire village of Huntly, has been particularly successful in creating a broad base of financial support. Only 20% of its funding comes from arts organisations, with the remainder coming from Europe (30%), the local authority (10%), and heritage, environmental and social funds.

On your marks

The Cultural Olympiad was a slow starter for many museums and galleries, but the projects are now gathering pace, as *Varya Shaw* reports



© FINLAY MACKAY/NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY/BT ROAD TO 2012 PROJECT

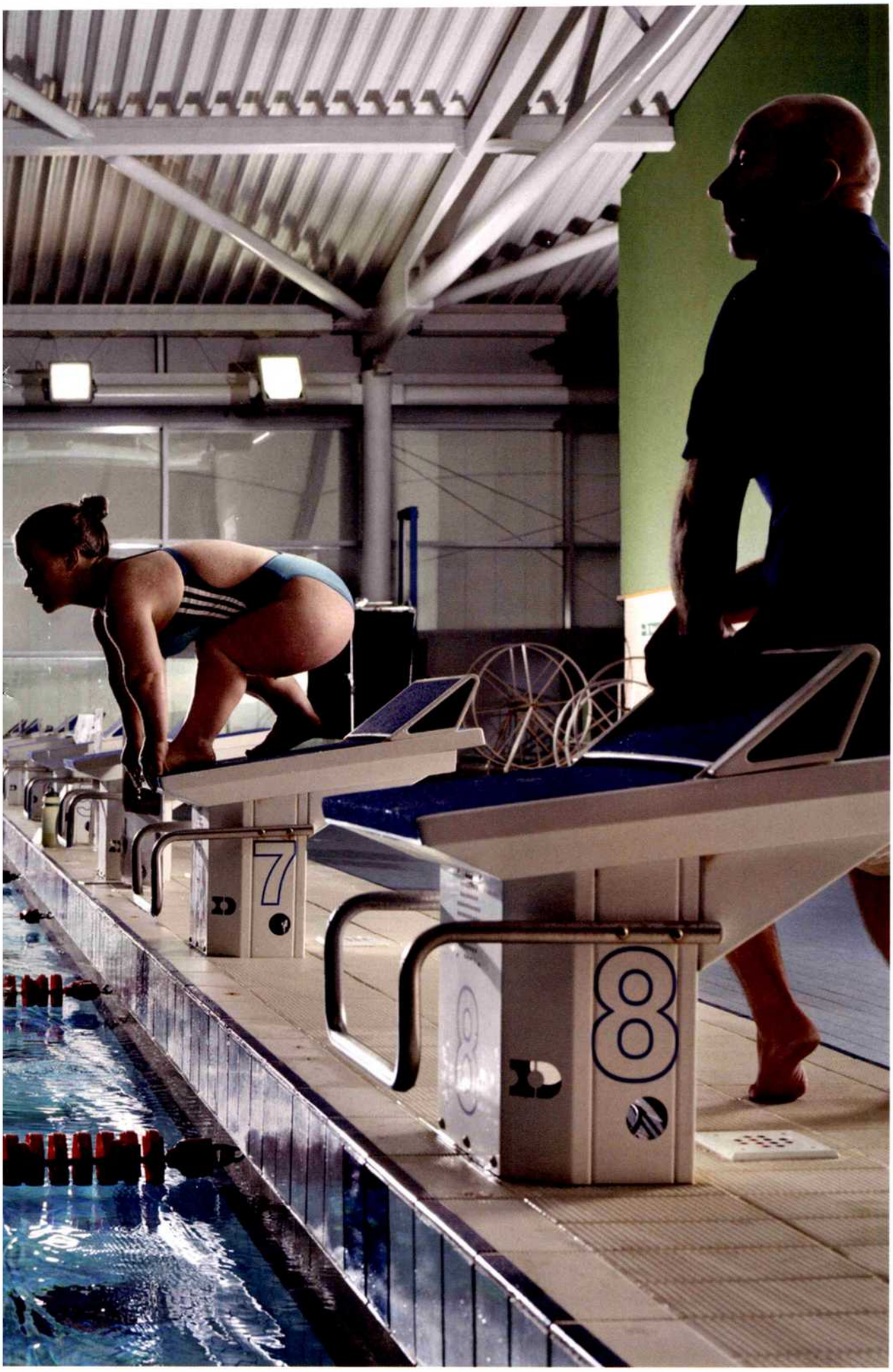
Paralympic champion Eleanor Simmonds with Billy Pye at the Wales National Pool, Swansea. The portrait by Finlay MacKay was commissioned for the National Portrait Gallery/BT Road to 2012 Project

The Cultural Olympiad was slow out of the starting blocks and began life as a rather aimless, bottom-up, artist-led initiative. But since cultural director Ruth Mackenzie took charge early last year it has upped its game and become leaner and meaner.

Museums and galleries have found it difficult to find out how to position themselves for 2012 activities, although last month's announcement that the Olympic Museum in Lausanne, Switzerland, will put on a show at London's Royal Opera House shows that things are starting to take shape.

The Cultural Olympiad is a four-year programme that started in 2008 and runs until 2012. It aims to encourage creativity and give everyone a chance to participate in London 2012. Activities cover everything from theatre and music to visual arts and literature, and culminate in the London 2012 Festival, which will bring together artists from all over the world.

The ride for museums and galleries has been bumpy. In the early days, non-nationals were invited to submit proposals for Stories of the World, a youth participation project that aimed to give those under 25 years old a chance to



Arts projects

The arts strand of the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad features a range of projects and programmes, including Artists Taking the Lead. This comprises 12 projects that have won commissions totalling £5.4m to create new works of art across the UK: one in each of the nine English regions, and also in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Another Cultural Olympiad arts initiative is Next Generation, which is being overseen by the National Portrait Gallery. This three-year project is designed to open up opportunities for 14-19 year-olds to engage with portraiture through the BP Portrait Award.

A number of projects have also been developed through Unlimited, a programme celebrating arts and culture by disabled and deaf artists. Unlimited is principally funded with lottery cash, and is delivered in partnership between London 2012, and the UK's national arts councils and the British Council.

In the latest round of funding, more than £820,000 was awarded under Unlimited to support 13 new commissions covering a range of artforms.

Tate is involved in the Cultural Olympiad though the Tate Movie Project's film The Itch of the Golden Nit. The cast will be voicing the characters in the half-hour animation, which has been created from drawings, sound effects and story ideas by children aged five to 13 from across the UK. It is funded with £3m from Legacy Trust UK, a charity set up to create a cultural and sporting legacy from the London 2012 Games. BP has also provided funding and the BBC is a supporter.

connect with collections that illustrate the UK's global links.

Fourteen projects were eventually tabled. But public indifference to the Olympiad and its perceived lack of direction was creating embarrassment. Mackenzie, who has advised the Department for Culture, Media and Sport on cultural policy and headed up organisations such as the Manchester International Festival and Scottish Opera, has a reputation for robust leadership. Not long after she was appointed in January 2010, only eight Stories of the World projects were left.

A bold project on sex and history proposed by the south-west region of England was among the casualties. Alan Caig, head of leisure and museums at Exeter City Council, says: "We were invited to be part of Stories of the World. We were very pleased with our scheme, everyone we spoke to thought it was great. We found it was subject to constant change, but we worked with that. It was submitted to some committee in London who decided they didn't want it and threw it out. That is the last we heard. No explanation, no regrets, no thanks for responding to a commission at our own cost. We were just bewildered."

More glitz

Some say Mackenzie found Stories of the World too worthy, and wanted more glitz.

Fran Hegyi, the senior cultural adviser at the London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games, told Museums Journal: "If you're pulling together a programme of brilliant work, you can't have everything. Unfortunately, boards sometimes have to make difficult decisions."

Isobel Siddons, the 2012 programme manager at the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, says the rejected bids did not meet the criteria, while those that went through had strong leadership and commitment from senior management.

Paul Mainds, the chief executive of the River & Rowing Museum in Henley-on-Thames and chairman of the Our Sporting Life steering committee, believes museums have to take responsibility: "It's up to the museum world to stamp its feet, get people interested. We've said we want to be part of it and as a result we've had really good support."

Our Sporting Life, which was set up by the Sports Heritage Network, is encouraging communities and schools to get in touch with their sporting roots through a series of exhibitions that are taking place at more than 100 towns and cities across the UK in the run up to 2012. The first Our Sporting Life exhibition opened at the River & Rowing Museum in March last year and has been followed by many others.

A number of other Cultural Olympiad projects have been proving their value. Steve Gardam is the Stories of the World project manager at the London Transport Museum. He says: "We've done youth participation

© BENEDICT JOHNSON (JEWISH MUSEUM); © HENLEY CRICKET CLUB. COURTESY RIVER & ROWING MUSEUM (ELL); © ADRIAN BROOKS (STOPWATCH)

Above: this stopwatch from the London 1908 Olympic Games featured in the River & Rowing Museum's Our Sporting Life exhibition. Right: Montague Spencer Ell did not let the loss of both arms in the first world war interfere with his croquet game. His story was told in the Our Sporting Life exhibition at the River & Rowing Museum Left and below: the Jewish Museum, London, and National Museums Scotland are participating in the Cultural Olympiad's Stories of the World initiative

before, but it can be passing – this is a period of very intense activity."

The museum has been working with four "young consultants" who are paid a small daily fee. One of these is Elvis Miranda. He says: "I really didn't like education because it's always a slow process. I didn't get the grades I needed to do A-levels. I did a BTec in media and then left school. With Stories of the World I thought it was perfect. It is a job I can do, get voices of young people heard, then leave with something to show for it."

Working at the museum has given Miranda responsibility and experience. He has developed workshops for young people, run a focus group and published a book of photos. He has also earned money, bought a camera and is embarking on a career as a photographer.

"Ladder of engagement"

London Transport Museum has funding for a Stories of the World legacy project. It will offer a "ladder of engagement" to young people – first volunteering, then paid mentor roles and, beyond that, consultant roles. It is aimed at young people who stand most to gain – those not in education, employment or training.

Many other museums are working with vulnerable youngsters (see below). Stories of the World demonstrates the social impact of museums in a financial era when it is critical they prove their worth.

A Stories of the World evaluation found that 90% of participants agreed that they had improved their communication skills and 93% their creative skills. More than 80% felt more part of their community and two thirds said they might or wanted to volunteer – quite a result in the big society era.

Stories of the World is also renewing museums' connection with their public. Siddons says: "We've got well over 1,000 young people being offered really in-depth involvement, and a whole load more involved in drop-in activities. We're hoping many will be inspired to look for careers in the sector. Many won't but will take with them a real passion for museums."

Mark Taylor, the director of the Museums Association, says the legacy is important: "London 2012 was sold on the basis of youth and it is right that Stories of the World brings together young people and the stories that collections have to tell. The legacy is likely to be as much in the engagement with new audiences and the skills museums have acquired as it is with the buildings and collections themselves."

Varya Shaw is a freelance journalist

Stories of the World

Stories of the World, part of the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad, is led by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council in partnership with the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games. It is centred on young people who have been working with curators to uncover objects that tell stories that reflect their interests. The final exhibitions – delivered by eight regional partnerships involving more than 50 museums – will cover themes such as immigration, fashion and empire and will shed new light on the UK's national identity. More than 1,500 young people have been recruited to develop the projects.

Examples of projects include the Foundling Museum, London, working with young people in care to produce art that conveys the living history of life without a conventional family.

The Florence Nightingale Museum's Stories of the World project involved a group of young people creating an audio guide for the museum.

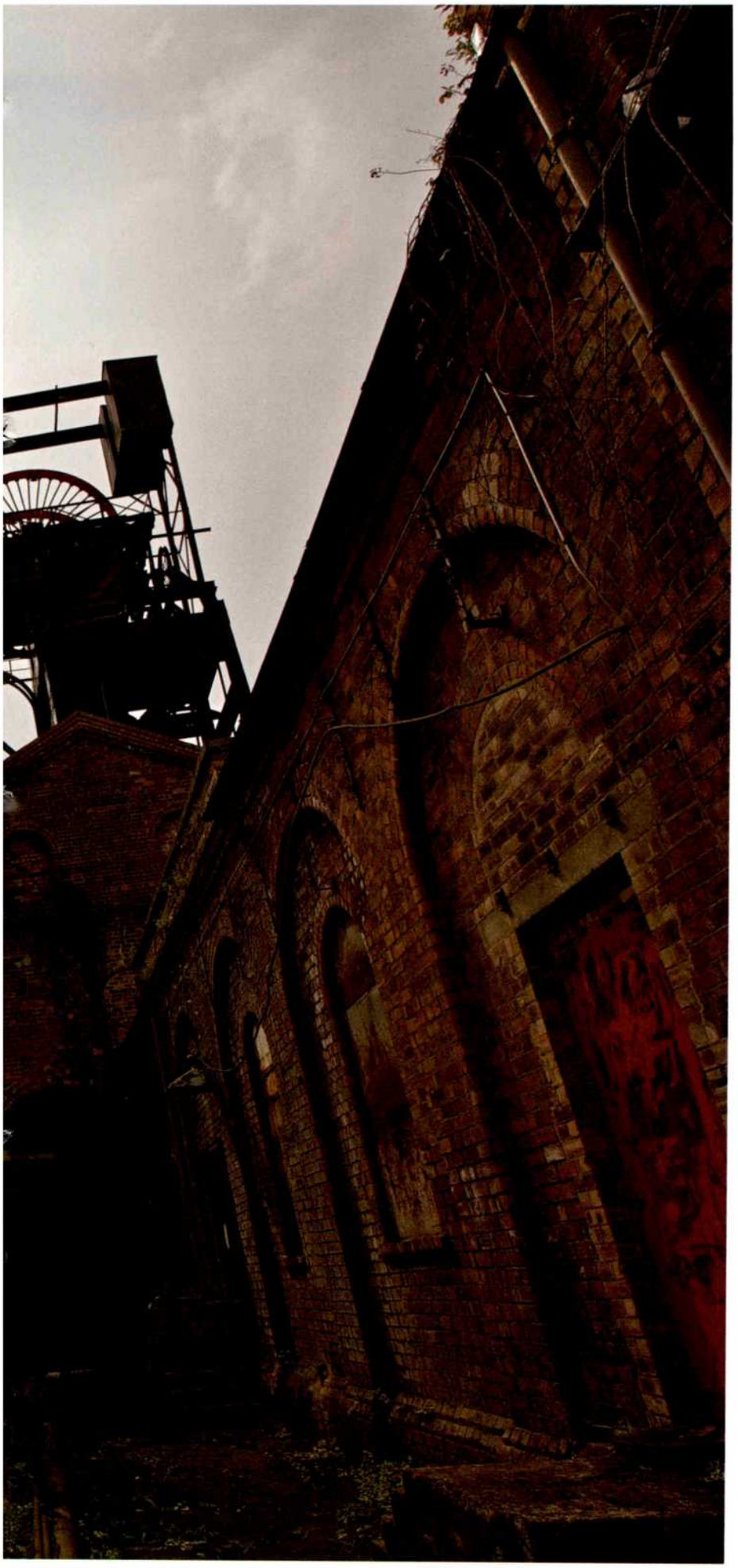
And the Jewish Museum's Stories of the World project invited Irish travellers, teenagers with disabilities and girls from a homeless hostel to work with Jewish objects to produce short films. The films are related to the theme of journeys.

Rowan Brown at a glance

Rowan Brown grew up in Glasgow and took an MA in art history at the University of St Andrews. She also has a postgraduate diploma in museum studies from the University of Leicester.

Her first museum job was in 2002 as a research assistant on the Kelvingrove New Century Project in Glasgow. She then became a curator of transport and technology at Glasgow Museums before joining National Museums Scotland (NMS) in 2006 as a curator of technology. She became the senior curator of technology at NMS in 2008 before joining the Scottish Mining Museum in 2010 as its director. The museum has been renamed the National Mining Museum Scotland.

Brown is a board member of the Museums Association, president of the Scottish Museums Federation and chairwoman of Industrial Museums Scotland.



Going underground

Not so long ago the National Mining Museum Scotland was limping along from crisis to crisis, but its new director Rowan Brown is looking to the future with confidence. *Simon Stephens* finds out why. Photographs by *Phil Sayer*

Many working in museums are only involved in one major capital project in their careers but Rowan Brown, the director of the National Mining Museum Scotland, is moving towards her third in less than 10 years.

The organisation, an independent that was known as the Scottish Mining Museum until it was rebranded last month, recently benefited from becoming one of three industrial museums to receive money direct from the Scottish government, giving it a stability that will allow it to support a major redevelopment. The scheme, which will allow visitors to go underground, is much-needed as, unlike the two major coalmining museums in England and Wales, the National Mining Museum Scotland does not offer visitors an underground tour.

But the capital project is some way off as Brown only joined the museum last year and is developing a range of smaller projects first.

"We are working towards a much bigger overall development and vision for the site but there are several steps to get there," says Brown. "We are keen to work hard on audience development over the next couple of years so that when we come to changing the galleries and programmes we will know we are really answering a legitimate need."

For now, Brown is overseeing projects such as the one ▶

National Mining Museum Scotland at a glance

The museum is based at the Lady Victoria Colliery in Newtongrange, just outside Edinburgh, and cares for Scotland's national coalmining collection. The collection at the museum comprises more than 60,000 items, including objects, archive material, photographs and books.

The Lady Victoria Colliery opened in the 1890s and became renowned as one of the first Scottish "super pits" and a showpiece for the industry. In its lifetime it produced a record 40 million tons of coal, all hauled up the 500-metre shaft by the largest winding engine in Scotland. At its peak, the colliery had a workforce of almost 2,000 men and women.

The colliery closed in 1981 and the museum opened in 1984.

The National Mining Museum Scotland employs 33 people (17 full-time equivalent) and has about 50 volunteers.

funded by the Museums Association's (MA) Effective Collections programme that is using the collections to help with Alzheimer's and dementia care. This outreach project is part of a plan by the museum to look at how it can use its collections in a more strategic way. Another scheme, funded by Cairn Energy, is a youth education project related to the use of fossil fuels.

A lot of Brown's thinking at the museum is about how to make coalmining relevant to modern life. As an industry it has almost totally disappeared, although there is some open cast mining in Scotland. But at its peak in the early 20th century more than 140,000 people were employed in Scottish coal mines.

"It is quite difficult to communicate, particularly to school children, as a lot of them have not even seen coal before," says Brown, who is trying to put coal into the wider context of today's energy development and supply.

The first capital project Brown worked on was the £27.9m redevelopment of Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum in Glasgow. She joined the museum service in 2002 and was a big fan of its museums, having grown up in the city.

"My favourite museum was Haggs Castle, which is no more, sadly. It had the children's toy collection but they also had a 16th-century herb garden and Mary Queen of Scots stayed there at one point, so you got to dress up as Mary. It was the most fantastic place for a small child."

After working on the Kelvingrove redevelopment, Brown became a curator at the city's transport museum and the plan was to stay at Glasgow Museums. But then a job came up at National Museums Scotland (NMS), an opportunity she did not feel she could turn down. Her time at NMS gave her the chance to work on another capital project, the £46m redevelopment of the Royal Museum, which will reopen as part of the National Museum of Scotland in July.

The job at the National Mining Museum Scotland means Brown has worked in local authority, national and independent museums during the past 10 years.

"Surprisingly, there have been more similarities between Lady Victoria here and working at the Museum of Transport in Glasgow because there is a very similar atmosphere, a similar size of team and everybody is incredibly enthusiastic about the place," Brown says.

In some ways, Brown has joined the National Mining Museum Scotland at a good time. Like other industrial museums in Scotland, it has struggled financially in recent years, a victim of being harder to reach than many venues

The National Mining Museum Scotland already offers visitors a range of experiences but an underground tour is one of the things that Rowan Brown is hoping to add as part of a wider capital project

and having to care for a large site with historic structures that are expensive to maintain. But direct funding from the Scottish government has made a huge difference.

"It is partly about status," says Brown. "The fact that we are now funded directly, like the Scottish Fisheries Museum and the Scottish Maritime Museum, recognises that we have a key role in Scotland's overall heritage offer, which is wonderful."

The museum has been further boosted by the launch in March of Industrial Museums Scotland. One of the aims of the federation, which is led by the three museums that now receive direct government funding, is to provide support for smaller industrial museums.

This was one of the ideas that came out of the Museums Think Tank, a group of experts brought together by the Scottish government to review how the sector could move forward. The group, whose report was published six months later than expected in December 2010, was also asked to look at the relationship between different types of museums and to create a strategic plan for the future.

The Scottish government has asked Museums Galleries Scotland (MGS) to develop the national strategy and a report is expected later this year following consultation during the summer. One of the think tank's key recommendations was that a national development body should be created as the single organisation to develop and deliver strategy. MGS, which also distributes government funding to the sector, could become this development body and abandon its status as a membership body.

"I think it would be wonderful if a grant-giving body was not also a membership body," says Brown. "That would allow it to be a lot tidier and it would also mean there can't be any arguments about subjectivity. There has been a lot of fantastic work done by MGS in recent years, and the Recognition scheme has virtually salvaged this place, but there are things that you might do differently and it is difficult to make those things heard within the context of a membership organisation."

One thing that Brown is keen to see as part of the development of national strategy is some meaningful public consultation.

"It would be very useful if we took this opportunity as a sector to talk to the public," Brown says. "That has been a huge gap in all the consultation exercises that have taken place in recent years. What we really need to do is talk to our audiences and non-audiences about what they want from the sector."

One of the reasons for this is that consultation might help the public understand more about the issues facing many of Scotland's museums.

"There is a lot misunderstanding in the public domain about the chunks of funding we get and what that means in reality. When you seen an HLF project that has a £50m or £75m price tag it is easy to think that the sector is really well funded. But it is always the usual suspects who can command that kind of funding and that is the bit that is not that well publicised."

Brown is keen on the benefits provided by the many networks that exist for museum professionals. The Scottish Museums Federation, an individual membership body, has been particularly important.

"I think the federation is great for people exchanging ideas, networking and learning about the sector and it is particularly good in the earlier stages of your career. It was a big influence on me personally because it meant I was able to get a much better sense of what was happening in museums generally rather than just being immersed in my own organisation. Glasgow City Council had a huge museum structure and NMS was huge, so you could quite easily be buffered from what goes on outside."

Brown has also been very much involved in the MA and says "it is vital to have a broader UK and international perspective on things".

As well as becoming an MA board member recently, she was involved in the development of Old Tools, New Uses, an innovative scheme created by the Scottish Transport and Industry Collections and Knowledge network and funded by the MA's Effective Collections scheme. The project allowed Scottish museums to have their tool and domestic technology collections assessed by an independent adviser. Some unwanted items were then donated to artisan communities in Africa.

"We don't have huge resources to spend, so it is important that everybody works together," says Brown, who is already very much imbued with the entrepreneurial spirit of independent museums. This attitude will be vital if her third major capital project is to be a success.

Rowan Brown is speaking at this year's Museums Association annual conference in Brighton (3-4 October)
www.museumsassociation.org/conference

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The Museum of... Our pick of the UK's specialist collections

Clang, clang, clang went the trolley: there are rides for all at the Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft, says *Louise Gray*

Where "Sandtoft is on the Isle of Axholme in North Lincolnshire," says Chas Allen, the commercial director of the Trolleybus Museum, which is housed in part of a disused second world war bomber station. A quarter-mile section of runway functions as a running circuit for the buses.

What "We have the world's largest collection of preserved trolleybuses at just under 50, and have most of the ones preserved in the UK," Allen says. He explains the essential difference between trolleybuses and trams: the former have rubber tyres and are driven electrically, picking up current from overhead cables; trams are railbound.

Opened 1969. The museum is open on alternate weekends from Easter to December.

Collection "Trolleybuses, mostly British ones, but some from the continent and Canada; motorbuses; cars; lawnmowers; a replica 1950s pre-fab; and a 1906 railwayman's house, which is being developed as a small exhibits hall," says Allen. The museum also has lots of related ephemera – books, photographs and service manuals. This year marks the centenary of the first trolleybus run – in Bradford – and the museum is organising a celebration this month.

Help at hand The museum is entirely run by 60 volunteers from backgrounds such as engineering, teaching and healthcare. Allen is a data manager in his other life.

Highlights Allen selects a 1937 trolleybus from South Shields and a 1953 motorbus from Doncaster, made to an old design. "They are both full of character and make different noises to most of our exhibits," he says.

Above: vintage cars also feature in the collection of the Trolleybus Museum at Sandtoft.
Below: the museum's home is a former bomber station from the second world war

Visitors 5,417 in 2010.

Budget £140,000, all of it raised by the museum. Adult admission is £6. "Every visitor gets unlimited rides on the buses," Allen says.

Sticky moment "A fire in the power room the day before our biggest event of 2010 was the worst," Allen says. "We managed to put the fire out and repair things, but we all had kittens."

Survival tip To continue evolving. "We want to widen our appeal," Allen says.

Future plans "Creating an audio archive figures high on its agenda. The last trolleybus ran in 1972, and the people associated with them are getting thin on the ground," Allen says.

www.sandtoft.org

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John Martin, Heaven and Hell, Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne, p46

Reviews

'Mezzotints of John Martin's Fall of Babylon and The Deluge hung on the walls of Haworth for the edification of the Brontë children, who put them into their own stories' *Peter Lewis* on John Martin, Heaven and Hell, Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne

Wrexham County Borough Museum & Archives, p44

Living Worlds, The Manchester Museum, p40

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Living Worlds, The Manchester Museum

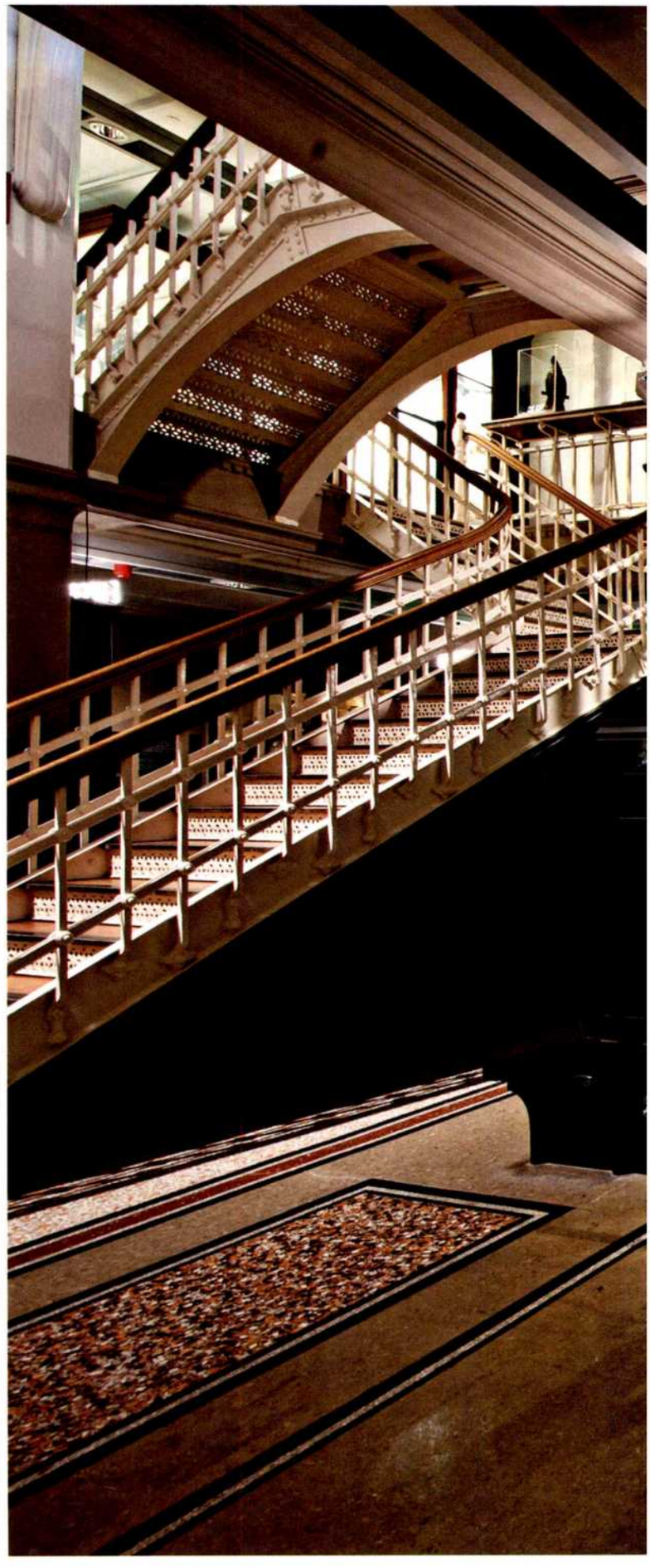
Oliver Green enjoys the Manchester Museum's clever and arty approach to redisplaying its natural history collection

One of the many delights of Manchester is the sheer variety of museum experiences available. There always seems to be something new to enjoy. This is not innovation and novelty for its own sake, but part of the city's strong sense of a distinctive urban history and cultural identity that has been reasserted in the past 15 years or so.

Whatever the reasons for this (and it is not just that old chestnut civic pride, which the Victorians practically invented here), it seems to give the many museums and galleries of Manchester a mutual creative spark.

Living Worlds recently opened at the Manchester Museum and is the latest example of this cultural creativity. The marketing blurb for the gallery on the museum's website is nothing if not aspirational: "Living Worlds explores the connections between all living things, including us, and shows how we can all shape the future by the choices we make... together, lots of tiny actions can change the world." This rather off-putting promo sounds ominously like a cross between Live Aid and the big society, but fortunately the gallery turns out to be something completely different and wholly enjoyable.

Living Worlds is an ingenious and arty revamp of one of the original museum galleries designed by the great Victorian architect Alfred Waterhouse in



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Left: the Manchester Museum's Living Worlds exhibition is an elegant redisplay of existing artefacts. Below left: neon title lights have a striking presence

the 1880s. The new displays are on the lower floor above which three galleried storeys rise dramatically along a central open well to the rooflights. The original layout and wooden showcases have been retained and the cast-iron architecture revealed and renovated.

The building is on a modest scale compared with Waterhouse's extravagantly decorated Manchester Town Hall or his museum masterpiece, the Natural History Museum, London, but it fully deserves this careful refurbishment. The new displays work beautifully within a very elegant and practical Victorian ambience, rather than fighting against it. One of the museum's old favourites, a huge sperm whale skeleton, has been left hanging in its original position looming over the whole gallery just as it did when first installed in the 1890s.

Neon titles

Living Worlds redisplays a very traditional natural history presentation of mounted specimens (or stuffed animals, as the museum insists on calling them) in a new context. Someone had the inspired idea of inviting Belgian art and fashion show producer Villa Eugénie to design the new displays and it has responded in a creative way that is a visual feast.

Each of the showcases is dramatically headlined on top with a neon single word in capital letters that leaps out of the darkness: Disasters, Symbols, Domination, Resources, Connect – all concepts rather than titles and with the feel of a modern art show. Below, the large built-in cases are internally lit with fibre optics to highlight individual objects or groups, mostly without labels so that the viewer concentrates on the items and their inter-relationship, not the captions.

Text panels on the side walls are short and suggestive rather than descriptive. The stated intention is to help visitors explore the natural world and ▶

True craftsmanship in museum displays

As the main fit out contractor, we really enjoyed working with Wrexham Museum and wish them the best of luck

Brymbo Cist Stone-
Wrexham Museum
and Archives

"Throughout the project museum staff were impressed by Workhaus's hands-on commitment to the project and their conscientiousness in getting the job done to a high standard"

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their relationship with it. I'm not sure that this works entirely as a communication strategy, and the approach is, perhaps deliberately, inconsistent.

Gallery visitors tend to bounce around a display like this, drawn to different exhibits in a random way, so any attempt to establish a sequence of interpretation and learning through theme, chronology or lifeform would probably be doomed to failure. I found this more fun and there are some well-chosen and thought-provoking ideas here that are much more interesting than tickbox learning outcomes.

Natural history displays often have "family friendly" running through them like a dumbed-down Blackpool rock, so it was a treat to see some thoughtful but accessible input from university academics to this exhibition.

"Space clockwork"

I was particularly taken with a contribution from Matthew Cobb, professor of zoology at the University of Manchester, whose text panel comment on why he was drawn to study lifeforms is worth quoting in full: "I want to know why animals behave the way they do. We can use Isaac Newton's laws of physics, discovered 400 years ago, to put a satellite around Jupiter but we cannot be sure which way a fly will move. This is because living things are amazingly complicated. The earth's eco-system has many millions of species and individuals interacting in the most varied of ways. Because of this it is difficult to be certain how animals and plants will respond to change. The solar system runs on a kind of 'space clockwork' but living things are weirder than chemistry and physics."

At a time when bullish tele-historians such as Niall Ferguson and David Starkey are confidently lecturing us with misplaced certainty about human history, it is refreshing to have a scientist cheerfully acknowledging how much we still don't know, and probably never will, about nature.

Unusually, Living Worlds is not about facts and certainties. It encourages the visitor to look and think. The most visually arresting exhibit is a showcase containing one large bird, a Chinese crane. All around it are white folded paper cranes that appear to be flying through the glass of the showcase. A short text panel describes the significance of cranes in Japanese folklore as an example of how humans can take inspiration from nature.

Above: origami cranes surround a mounted bird in one of Living Worlds's visually stunning displays. Below: unusually for a natural history exhibition, certainty is not at its heart

A thousand origami cranes, called senbazuru, are apparently an established good luck gift at Japanese weddings, and this tradition has been reinforced by the popular story of Sadako Sasaki, a teenage girl who believed she would recover from the radiation sickness she suffered after the attack on Hiroshima, if only she could fold 1,000 cranes. As an inspirational tale it is a curious choice to feature in the exhibition as she died after she completed the 644th crane, although the caption leaves her fate open-ended. Whatever the truth of the incident, the text and display does inspire reflection. Myths and stories can be more powerful than facts, and I saw one mother reading out the label to her young son as an explanation of a striking exhibit.

Dead groovy

After I left the museum I suddenly realised what is missing from Living Worlds. Despite the gallery's title, this is actually a rather arty display of dead things, which has a slightly Damien Hirst feel about it. Where is the life? This is a familiar problem for natural history displays, which usually have to resort to videos or aquaria to introduce a bit of movement.

The ideal solution came to me in a flash. The last time I visited the Manchester Museum, some years ago, I seem to recall a live beehive display, possibly on an upper floor of this very gallery, where there is now an impressive activity and collections centre. Bees have always been big in Manchester: that old hive of industry symbolism was incorporated in the design of the city's coat of arms years ago, and bees feature strongly in the Victorian mosaic floors of the town hall. Last year the council even considered a proposal to put beehives on the roof as part of its greening the city strategy. I'm not sure what happened to that idea, but here is my suggestion for the Manchester Museum to get one step ahead and develop the next stage of Living Worlds: bring back the bees, but with a groovy postmodern hive.

Oliver Green is a research fellow at the London Transport Museum

Project data

Cost £400,000
Main funders Northwest Regional Development Agency; DCMS/ Wolfson Museums and Galleries Improvement Fund
Exhibition design Villa Eugénie

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Wrexham County Borough Museum & Archives

Lynn Podmore visits Wrexham to find out how the town's revamped museum is engaging locals and tourists

"Explore Your Heritage," states a sign outside the recently refurbished Wrexham County Borough Museum & Archives. So, before I had even begun to discover how its £2m facelift had brought the 19th-century barracks up to 21st-century museum standards, I was already pondering questions about what to expect from a border town museum and how it would engage its residents and the wider public.

The large, glazed extension works well, particularly because the heritage of the building has not been masked, allowing the traditional sandstone structure and its archways to be admired. This bright, welcoming space houses the reception, shop and cafe area.

There are three bilingual exhibition spaces on the ground floor. The entrance to the main gallery is flanked on each side by themed community displays curated by museum staff, volunteers and community organisations. These include a secondary school, which has selected artefacts relating to the Gresford colliery disaster of 1934.

It is obvious that the museum has sought to engage audiences with their heritage. However, it could benefit from a little more information about some of the artefacts or a quote from a participant highlighting why they had chosen a particular item.

A video installation gradually fades-in archive photographs of local landscapes and urban scenes. The moving images can be seen from outside, enticing people to come in to explore.

"Smelly old Wrexham"

A key exhibit is Wrexham's oldest resident, Brymbo Man. The displays reveal how the Bronze Age burial space was accidentally uncovered by workmen digging a trench in 1958. The stone-lined box revealed skeletal remains, a beaker pot and a flint knife. Visitors can read or listen to newspaper extracts about its discovery and the display reveals how Brymbo Man's face has been reconstructed through scientific techniques. This encourages visitors to think about what has been discovered as well as what cannot be explained by science.

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Project data

Cost £2m
Main funders Heritage Lottery Fund; Wrexham County Borough Council; Welsh Assembly Government
Exhibitions design Bright3d
Architect Austin-Smith: Lord
Main contractor ISG Regions
Gallery fit-out Workhaus
AV and IT fit-out Fusion LX
Display cases Armour Systems
Illustrations Bark Design
Interactives and audiovisuals Concept, Centre Screen; Ancient Arts; Ay-pe; Heritage Interactive; Davies Community Films; Spinitex (Toukan); Media Vision; EDM, Bark Design; AIVAF

Above left: a £2m revamp for Wrexham Museum has resulted in a bright and attractive building. Above and above right: inside, the galleries move from archaeology to the contemporary

The archaeology theme continues with the discovery of the Rossett Hoard, which includes a socketed axe, pieces of gold and a tanged blade dating from 1000-800BC. The display also includes two engaging short films: the first explains how ore was made into metal and the second provides an experimental demonstration of how the axe could have been moulded and produced.

The use of computers is a key feature throughout the main gallery. On a positive note it allows further exploration of key artefacts and related stories, but unfortunately a couple of the touchscreen displays were not operational when I visited.

Thankfully, there were plenty of other films, commentaries and low-tech interactives to keep visitors engaged. The Age of the Princes interactive, snakes and ladders with an historical twist, allows participants to compete to be the Prince of Wales in the 13th century. The wall-mounted board game, along with its spinning dial and magnetic pieces, incorporates aspects of Welsh history, and requires two participants to play. I saw several families enjoying the cut and thrust of medieval life.

The area referred to as Smelly Old Wrexham encourages visitors to follow a trail around the Victorian streets of the town guided by a greyhound and to lift flaps to smell various aromas of the industrial age, including Wrexham's leatherworks and brewery – a sure hit for everybody.

Local history

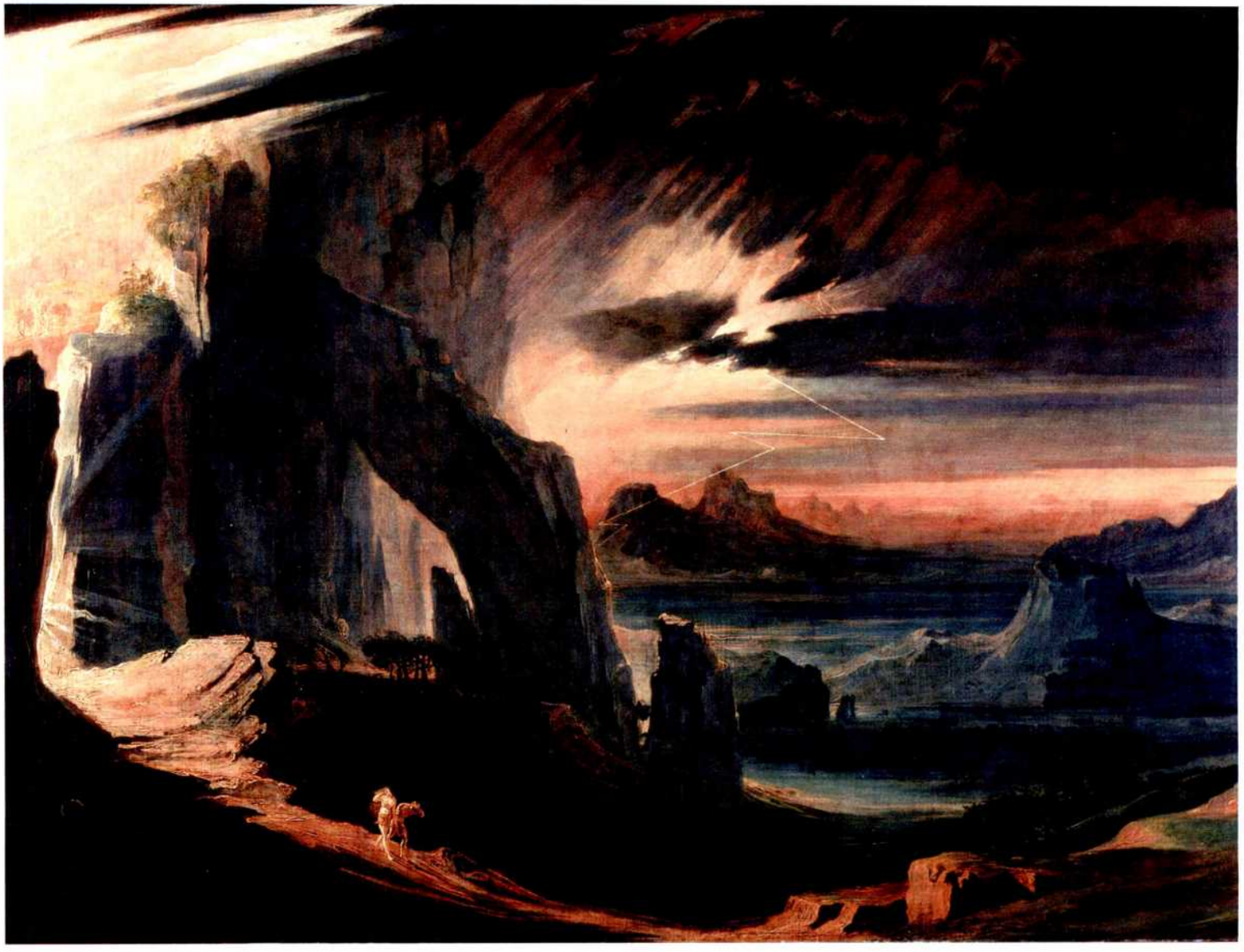
The Dating Game challenges visitors to date seven artefacts from the Stone Age through to the medieval period. Depending on your answers you get a boo or a cheer, which adds a bit of fun to what could have been a dull historic timeline.

Our Heritage, Our Stories is an exhibition devised with local history societies from around Wrexham that aims to tell stories from their communities. Audio equipment competed for attention in the gallery, there was no introductory panel and each organisation had designed their own pop-up panel. It looked a bit disjointed, although I am sure the participants gained a lot from the process.

The final temporary exhibition space currently shows Hall of Heroes, featuring football memorabilia, including some from the legendary John Charles collection. From the summer it will showcase collections from Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales and the National Library of Wales, which will be a more fitting use for this space. It is a great opportunity for all to build stronger links and provide access to exciting collections in north-east Wales.

As I left the museum I was again reminded of the "Explore Your Heritage" sign. Wrexham's archaeological, industrial and volatile past are all here, as are access to national collections and temporary exhibitions. This is not my heritage to explore as such, rather I was visiting an old haunt, but there is interest here too for tourists and for others from across the border.

Lynn Podmore is the learning and visitor services manager at Tatton Park, Cheshire



COURTESY LAING ART GALLERY, TYNE & WEAR ARCHIVES & MUSEUMS | THE EXPULSION OF ADAM AND EVE). © TATE, 2008 | GREAT DAY OF HIS WRATH

Temporary exhibition

John Martin, Heaven and Hell, Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne

Peter Lewis applauds an exhibition that is helping visitors rediscover the dramatic works of Northumberland-born artist John Martin

Northumbria has rediscovered the 19th-century artist John Martin. It has taken some time. The last exhibition, John Martin: Artist-Reformer-Engineer, was in 1970, long after the 1951 Festival of Britain display of Martin's work in Tyneside's Contribution to Art.

More than 80 works have been assembled at the Laing Art Gallery's show, Heaven and Hell. Martin's work will then visit the Millennium Gallery in Sheffield in late June and from September until January 2012 they will be at Tate Britain.

Julie Milne of the Laing is insistent that Martin is seriously undervalued: "He had a unique vision... he was one of the very strong exponents of the sublime, along with people like Turner, and he deserves his place beside those painters."

Martin was born near Haydon Bridge in 1789. "By birth, my station could scarcely have been humbler," he wrote. His mother taught the surviving five of her 13 children to follow a strict Calvinistic protestantism. John's elder brother, Jonathan, who later sought to exemplify that faith by burning down York Minster, recalled that their mother insisted: "There was a God to serve... and that all liars and swearers are burnt in Hell with the devil."

John's father, Fenwick, sought a liberal education for John at the nearby grammar school. Aged 14, the boy was apprenticed to a decorator of coaches in Newcastle. At 17 he left for London where, after some months of penury, he became a painter on glass and china. He received no academic training in formal painting and was derided by the art establishment. The Royal Academy of Arts in London reluctantly exhibited a few pictures but his application for membership was rejected.

His paintings are usually categorised as within the genre of the apocalyptic sublime; sublime in its classical meaning of an effect that is unexpected, inspiring or horrifying. At the time Martin was painting, all of Europe was apprehensive of wars, revolutions and civil unrest; hardships, famines and bad harvests abounded. Little wonder then that in literature and art the images of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse were galloping fast.

The end is nigh

Martin, ever the showman, exploited this sense of terror. He filled his huge canvases with extravagant landscapes in which the earth convulses, the waters boil, the sun and the moon stand still and the buildings of a puny mankind fall into a fiery pit.

The most famous of these pictures: The Great Day of His Wrath; Belshazzar's Feast; The Last Judgement; The Last Man, Joshua Commanding the Sun to Stand Still, dominate the walls of the Laing in great swathes of molten reds and coruscating oranges. At one time we might have viewed them with amused detachment, examples of 19th-century religious obsessions. But now it is unsettling to see their closeness to the images on our television screens of events in Australia, New Zealand, Japan and the Middle East.

My first visit to the Laing to see the Martin exhibition coincided with a school party of seven-year-olds, one of who explained to me that the picture we both were studying was "a ginormous earthquake and tsunami". A elderly couple nearby informed me earnestly that the exhibition was part of a divine warning that the world would end this summer.

My second visit to the exhibition was to hear two lectures arranged for the University of the Third Age. Our expert gave us a detailed resumé of the life of Martin, then an assessment of his status as a painter. Armed with a great deal of advice, we went back into the galleries to test whether Martin could stand comparison with Turner and his contemporaries.

Martin was a phenomenon; by today's definition, a celebrity. He was not, however, the ignorant Geordie of legend but a highly cultivated self-made man who built up a circle of patrons and friends, including Prince Albert, Charles Dickens, Isambard Kingdom Brunel and Turner, among many others.

Had he not been an artist he could have been an engineer of distinction. The exhibition suggests that his preoccupation with cataclysmic doom inspired his passion for urban improvement. Among his displayed projects are detailed plans for a Thames Embankment, a circular London railway line and a modern sewage system for the capital – all projects picked up and completed by others.

Left: the Expulsion of Adam and Eve from Paradise is typical of John Martin's dramatic Biblical scenes. Right: blazing colour schemes provide good foils to Martin's apocalyptic subject matter. Below: one of Martin's most famous works, The Great Day of His Wrath, dominates the gallery

Project data

Cost £155,000
Main funders Heritage Lottery Fund £55,900; MLA Renaissance £14,620; Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums £15,480 (Great British Art Debate) Fenwick Limited £20,000; Friends of the Laing £20,000; Newcastle City Council £11,500; Sir James Knott Trust £10,000; John Martin Circle £7,500 (non-Great British Art Debate budget)
Curators Julie Milne, Sarah Richardson (Laing Art Gallery), Martin Myrone, Anna Austen (Tate Britain)
Design Haley Sharpe and in-house
Exhibition ends 5 June

Cinematic inheritors

In the 1820s he became aware of a mass market for his work through reproductions. Martin taught himself the techniques of engraving on steel rather conventional copperplate. The mezzotints he produced became a creative medium in its own right. The series of illustrations he created for Milton's Paradise Lost are truly sublime in their fine detail, imagination and artistry. And they were influential. Mezzotints of The Fall of Babylon and The Deluge hung on the walls of Haworth for the edification of the Brontë children, who incorporated them in their own storytelling. From withering depths to Wuthering Heights in one generation.

But what of the huge paintings that are supposedly the stars of Heaven and Hell? The images of Hell have an impact but Heaven seems very wishy-washy, with floaty feathery angels. Martin's figure drawing is dreadful, as exemplified in the inept painting he made for Queen Victoria's coronation, where the texture of the paint looks like linoleum. Martin is always stolidly theatrical, almost cinematic, in his treatment of scale and architecture. He addresses the eye rather than challenges the mind. The argument that his true inheritors were film-makers such as DW Griffith and Cecil B DeMille is a convincing one.

This is a fine exhibition; informative, provocative and long overdue. Anyone interested in British art should catch the show in Sheffield or Tate Britain... unless, of course, the Apocalypse strikes first.

Peter Lewis is a writer and a past director of Beamish, the North of England Open Air Museum

Books

Women Building History: Public Art at the 1893 Columbian Exposition

Could Chicago's World Fair have been the site for the first wave of modern feminism, asks *Louise Gray*

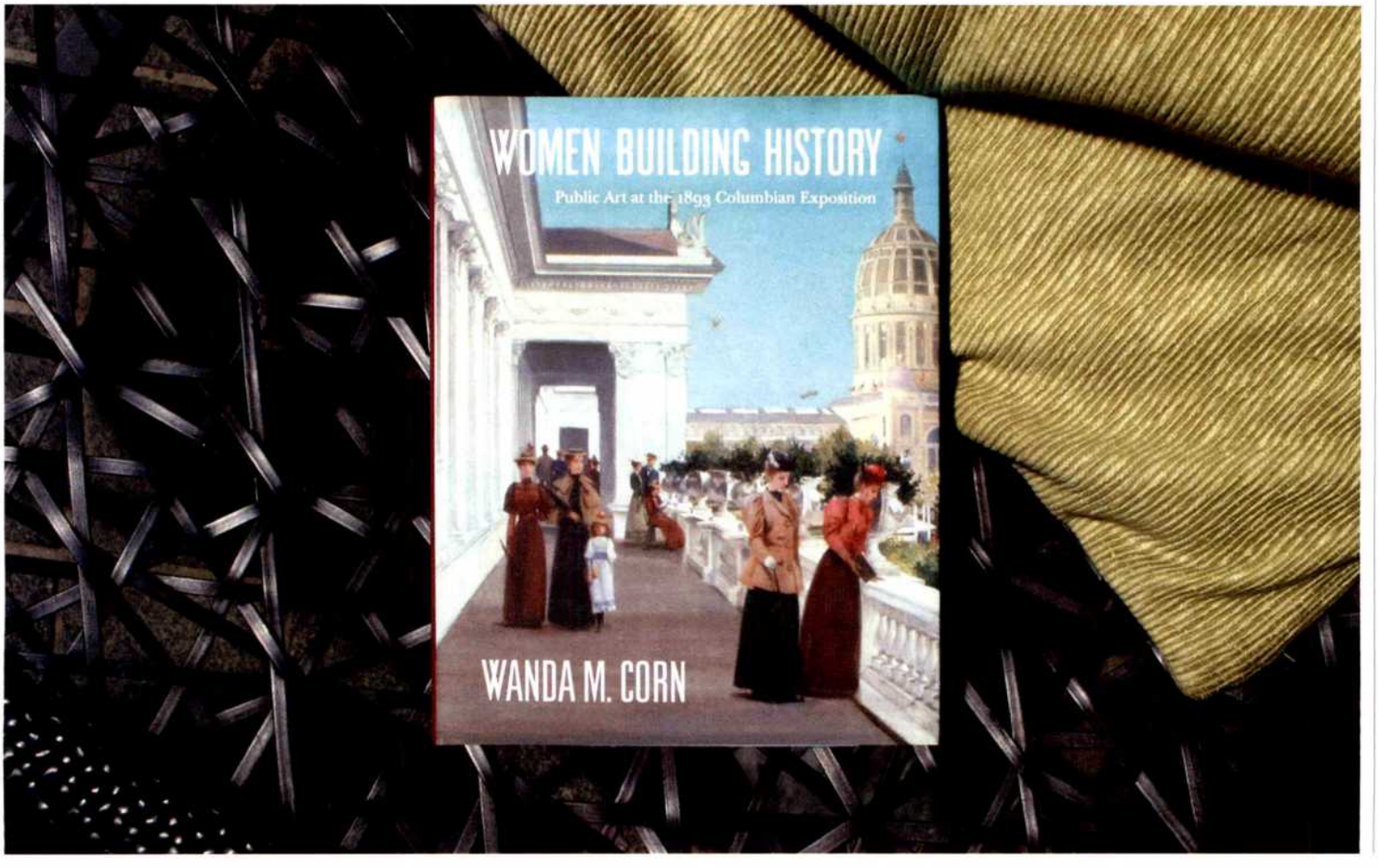
The Chicago World Fair of 1893 was a celebration of American ingenuity and modernism. Also referred to as the Columbian Exposition, it commemorated 400 years of America since Christopher Columbus sailed the ocean blue in 1492.

Fairs of this type are always more than the sum of their side-shows. They are huge and expensive; they seek to represent national abstracts – progress, creativity, genius, collectivity and future vision. (Britain had done much the same in 1851 with the Great Exhibition and it would do it again a century later with the Festival of Britain.)

The Columbian Exposition was big – 644 acres in south Chicago with malls, buildings, exhibition halls, lagoons and artworks. It boasted electrically lit buildings and coloured spotlights. The world's first big wheel (touché to the Eiffel Tower that had wowed visitors to the 1889 French fair) was a big draw. Americans visited and revisited in their millions. They were attracted as much by the presentation of the modern world as its antithesis: in the fair's Midway section, rudimentary rural dwellings, Samoan villages and folkloric exhibits showed what many of their families had left behind.

Author and Stanford art historian Wanda Corn points out the "profound experience" that visitors gained from the fair, an event that was memorialised with souvenirs of every imaginable type. This Chicago fair served many needs, not least the appeal to a symbolic national unity following the trauma of the civil war. Moreover, the United States was still in the process of making itself: in 1893 it consisted of 44 states (today there are 50) and then, as now, there was much debate about what was, or who could be, an American. This latter was debated with some urgency as new immigrants arrived daily at America's ports.

These themes may have been undercurrents to the narrative of the fair, but they were present, as was the issue of gender – and the role of women in this new world. Corn's focus is, as her title suggests, on women's contributions to the fair, not just as artists but also as managers. One of the constructions of the



exposition was the Women's Building. Financed by the US government and organised by hundreds of "lady managers" (led by their philanthropist president Bertha Palmer), architects and artists, the function of the neo-classical building was to demonstrate everything that the modern woman was capable of. High-minded debates held there ranged from dress reform to professional emancipation.

This book, written with contributions from art historians Charlene Garfinkle and Annelise Madsen, is incisive and has an acute eye always open for the historical – artistic, political and social – contexts of the exposition. Sidebars appear on female suffrage (a hot issue in 1893), Parisian public art (a beaux-arts model for much of Chicago's murals), and the first women's pavilion at the 1896 Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia.

All this is significant, because the thrust of the Women's Building and its contents was more subtle than the brash celebrations of the rest of the fair. While its overt emphasis was on "quality and equality" – and Palmer drew in artists and contributors from all over the world to fulfil this – the psychic significance reached far beyond this. Corn is right in seeing that the fair presented gendered narratives: the male ones "configured in a world history of civilisation", the female counterpart concentrating on the "liberation from the confinements of a patriarchal past".

Corn marshals her argument well. Women Building History has a wealth of supporting data – plans, photographs, biographies of the main women involved with the Women's Building.

How successful was the Women's Building? Corn notes that it would be another 75 years before a new wave of feminist artists emerged to challenge the authority of the academy. But in so doing, she acknowledges the work that Palmer and her cohorts actually achieved as a first wave of feminism.

By Wanda Corn, University of California Press, £34.95
ISBN 978 052024111 4

Louise Gray is a freelance journalist

On my bookshelf

Danny Birchall

Len Lye, by Roger Horrocks

I first encountered Len Lye's films during a staff induction at the National Film and Television Archive where conservators were bringing vibrant colour back to his 1935 abstract short A Colour Box. I was blown away seeing for the first time a film that had been made by drawing directly onto the filmstrip.

I came across Lye's kinetic sculptures when travelling in his native New Zealand: the immense red stalk of the New Plymouth's Wind Wand and the Water Whirler in Wellington. I took a week off to volunteer at the Govett-Brewster Gallery, New Plymouth, which houses Lye's archive, revamping the Lye section of their website. My reward was an afternoon spent in the basement with Lye's drawings, maquettes and working film strips.

Horrocks's biography tells the life story of this visionary artist, from small-town beginnings in New Zealand through to his time in London, where he fell among the interwar bohemian set of Robert Graves and Dylan Thomas. A pioneer in abstract film and kinetic sculpture, he ended his days in New York still trying to realise his powerful art.

Lye's work continues to fascinate: a recent exhibition at the Ikon Gallery in Birmingham brought some of his sculpture to the UK, and a DVD collection of his films is in the offing. His work, and the story of his life, which has followed me from film archives to contemporary art, still inspires me.

Danny Birchall is the website editor at the Wellcome Collection, London
museumcultures.wordpress.com

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Obituary

James Ford-Smith (1939-2010)

Museums Association (MA) members will be sad to hear of the death of James Ford-Smith, a longtime Fellow of the MA.

James was born in Leicestershire just before the outbreak of the second world war. His father was killed in 1940 in the Norway campaign. James was brought up as an only child by his mother and grandmother. At the age of four he was diagnosed with diabetes. Typically, James considered that this might have been an advantage as he learned early how to manage the disease.

James was educated at the Wyggeston School in Leicester. He read English at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, and graduated in 1961. From an early age James had a deep appreciation of art and literature. On graduation he had a post in the Leicester Museum of Art before being appointed to the Laing Art Gallery in Newcastle. In 1966 he was appointed keeper of art at the Ulster Museum. This was a fruitful period of his life. Funds had been made available for the purchase of contemporary paintings and James was able to play an important role in this selection.

James Ford-Smith was dedicated to public service

James then faced a terrible blow: in 1971 he became totally blind. Amazingly, with the aid of friends and colleagues, he overcame this. A post was created for him as special projects officer. This allowed him to develop other art forms within the museum, encouraging music, drama and poetry within the gallery spaces, thus making use of his other many interests and talents. For his services to museums, James was elected as a Fellow of the MA in 1972.

He became a moving force for improving facilities for the blind, in Belfast and the rest of Northern Ireland, speaking on Radio Ulster and setting up a charity which led to a blind centre being established. It was for this work that he was appointed an OBE. He was also awarded the freedom of the city of Belfast.

James moved back to England in 1987, first to the south of England and then to Berkhamsted, where he served on the town council for many years. He maintained his interest in local art galleries and was a trustee of the Dacorum Heritage Trust.

On moving to Girton in the early 2000s, he was elected to the parish council and continued to serve as a councillor up to his death. He maintained his interest in museums by becoming a member of the Cambridgeshire County Council Museums Advisory Committee. He also advised his old college on its small museum.

In the last part of his life James suffered challenging health problems, including cancer, but his continued contribution to public life was made possible though a small group of friends.

Amazingly, James never expressed self pity. He was quite surprised when told that he would be considered for many years as an inspiration in life for others.

Jean Currie was a friend of James Ford-Smith

MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

Annual General Meeting 2011

The **2011 Annual General Meeting** of the Museums Association will take place at 1715 on Monday 3 October in the Brighton Centre, Brighton. All members are eligible to attend and propose special or ordinary resolutions. Resolutions should be submitted to the Director by Friday 5 August. Any members wishing to do so should obtain details from the Director. The agenda and papers for the AGM will be made available to all members in early September.

Profile Jennie Gadsby: researcher

After initially studying for a career in theatre design, Jennie Gadsby began researching ways of making museums more visitor-friendly. She is currently helping Fishbourne Roman Palace in West Sussex rethink its entire visitor experience as part of the Knowledge Transfer Partnership graduate recruitment scheme.

What is your role at Fishbourne Roman Palace?
The aim is to review and analyse all ideas about developing the site and making sure it's sustainable. There's a lot of consultation with visitors, community outreach, demographics and tourist profiling, marketing strategy and branding. But this is not just about people like me coming in for six months and then simply leaving behind a huge report full of suggestions. There are no preconceptions; everyone involved is open to anything.

Does social media play a part?
I've been dragged into tweeting, yes. I was not an enthusiastic user of Twitter before I started messaging on behalf of the ancient Romans. I think I'd probably sent a total of eight. I think it's important to use it not just as a promotional tool but as something that can forge a personality for the palace and encourage users to engage with us. There are lots of museums tweeting "this exhibition's now on" and that's just cheap-shot advertising.

How did you end up in the museum world?
I realised I wasn't going to make any money in theatre so I started an MA in interior design to get some computer skills but I hated everything about that. I then worked on a master's project about museums and the parallels between the two worlds excited me. I really wanted to explore how the principles of theatre could be adopted into museums. I became fascinated with people's emotional responses to museums, spaces and objects – wonder, empathy, nostalgia, surprise and so on. Theatres have always been about creating environments appropriate to stories and it's an approach that works in museums, too.

Jennie Gadsby is figuring out how to improve modern relations with ancient Romans

What did you design during your theatre work?
One day I might have been trying to make a rock out of polystyrene that needed to be heavy enough for someone to stand on but light enough to carry, the next day trying to fit 100 child actors into Victorian tuxedos. It was different every day. Museums can learn a lot about that kind of diversity, too; it's good to change things around.

Who's more precious – local authority curator or repertory luvvie?
All I'll say is curatorship is about projecting passion about an object or collection and that's nowhere near as self-indulgent as some actors can be.

Moves

Jaane Rowehl has moved to Fishbourne Roman Palace, West Sussex, as its new director. She was previously the museum development officer for East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire.

Philip Long will take up the directorship of the V&A at Dundee in July. He is currently senior curator of the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art and leads the National Galleries of Scotland's Artist Rooms project.

Isabel Hughes, a freelance consultant and former assistant education officer at the Royal Armouries in the Tower of London, has joined the Museum of English Rural Life, Reading, as its new curator of collections.

Helen Williams is the new head of heritage at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. She was formerly the head of museums and libraries.

Andy Pearce has become the project coordinator for the new National Football Museum at Urbis, Manchester. He joins from the People's History Museum, where he was deputy director/project sponsor.

New staff at the Black Cultural Archives, London: collections manager **Victoria Lane** previously worked in a range of local and specialist repositories; learning manager **Anne-Marie Sandos** was the social inclusion officer at the Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry; fundraising manager **Davinia Batley** has worked for numerous charities; and assistant archivist **Symeon Brown**, joins from a public affairs traineeship at MHP Communications.

Jaane Rowehl

Philip Long

Farnham Castle's new chief executive is **Phil Hackett**, formerly chief executive of Shakespeare Country, the tourist board for Stratford-upon-Avon and the surrounding area. He succeeds **Jim Twiss**, who retired from the Surrey venue in March.

David Sieff, a former non-executive director of Marks & Spencer (M&S), has been appointed as director of the M&S Company Archive and Museum, which is to open in Leeds in November. **Stella Rimington**, the former director general of MI5, has also been appointed to the board. The chairman is **Graham Oakley**, a former company secretary of M&S.

Who got the job?

Assistant curator (photographic library and documentation), Rothschild Collection, Bucks
Salary: n/a
Advertised: MJ, November 2010

Rachel Jacobs

What attracted you to the job? The opportunity to work with an extremely impressive and varied collection within the context of a historic house.
The does it entail? So far, I have assisted with the production of images for an upcoming exhibition, researched documentation, started preliminary research for a future exhibition and tended to photographic requests.
Other jobs Curatorial and education intern, New Art Gallery, Walsall; curatorial assistant, University of Toronto Arts Centre.
Qualifications HBA art history and French literature, MA art museum and gallery studies.

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MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

Museums Association Conference & Exhibition 2011
Brighton Centre 3-4 October 2011

Calling all Museum Studies students

Volunteer for free entry to the Brighton Conference & Exhibition 2011

The MA needs volunteers to help at Brighton 2011. It's good fun and you'll get into the event completely free, in exchange for helping us out. Duties include the set-up day (2 October), and front of house and theatre stewarding throughout the event. If you are interested and would like further details please contact Lorraine O'Leary **lorraine@museumsassociation.org**

Please note we are unable to offer assistance with travel or accommodation

www.museumsassociation.org/conference

Museums Journal

Our readers recognise **Museums Journal Jobs** and its online recruitment listings as the very best place to find the next step for their careers.

To advertise a job call 020 7426 6930 or fax 020 7426 6932 or email **adverts@museumsassociation.org**

Placement fellowship opportunity

MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

Project title: Selling museum collections
Length of fellowship: 12 months starting in August/September 2011
Location of fellowship: MA offices, London, but can be partly home based
Closing date: 28 June 2011

The Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) offer a Public Policy Fellowship Scheme to encourage researchers to spend time within a partner organisation to undertake policy relevant research, and to facilitate knowledge exchange and development of research capacity and capability. Applications will be welcome from arts and humanities academics interested in working in a research capacity with the Museums Association (MA).

Aims

The fellow will review a range of issues relating to the sale of museum collections in the UK and provide policy advice for museums and sector organisations. The fellowship is time limited, focusing on the ethical and legal aspects of disposal of collections.

During the placement the fellow will:

- develop an understanding of the contemporary value of museum collections, including a consideration of the challenges regarding the disposal of material culture in all its forms;
- examine the dynamic between the media and museums, as related to disposal by sale;
- review developments in financially motivated disposal since the 2007 change to the MA's Code of Ethics;
- investigate the views of national and international bodies that support and advise museums;
- potentially spend one day a month visiting the AHRC offices in Swindon to work with the Cultures and Heritage team on the emerging Care for the Future theme.

Skills required

Essential:

- An arts & humanities background, preferably with knowledge or understanding of UK museums, cultural property law, charity law and/or working for public benefit.
- The ability to understand the different purposes and practices of museum disposal in the UK and to translate theory and principle into practical advice.
- The ability to write clear and accessible reports and give formal and informal presentations to a variety of audiences.
- Strong interpersonal and networking skills.
- Experience of project management

Desirable:

- The ability to attend the MA offices at least two days per week.
- The ability to travel in the UK, including to AHRC offices and occasional overnight stays.

Applicants do not need to hold a doctorate, but must be able to demonstrate equivalent experience of undertaking research at a post-doctoral level and must be a practising academic.

Information and applying

Full details of the Fellowship are on the ESRC and AHRC websites. For further information please contact Lesley Lilley: **lesley.lilley@esrc.ac.uk**

Funding: Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service has until 21 June to raise £300,000 to purchase the Wickham Market hoard of 840 gold coins dating from between 20 BC and 20 AD

The Wickham Hoard is the biggest Iron Age coin collection to be discovered

Find an object

When disposing, give priority to transferring, preferably by gift, to accredited museums. Any proposed sales to other museums listed here have been judged to be compatible with the Museums Association's (MA) code of ethics. For further advice, see the MA's ethical guidelines (*www.museumsassociation.org*) or contact the MA's ethics department (020 7426 6953). More details about some of the items on offer below can be found on the MA's Find an Object listing service, *www.museumsassociation.org/collections/find-an-object*.

Find an Object allows you to post adverts for disposals or loans throughout the month. All objects for sale on the Find an Object site must comply with Section 6 of the MA's code of ethics. Disposal toolkit guidelines can be found at *www.museumsassociation.org/collections/disposal*

The Design Museum, London, is on the hunt for a 1958 parking meter created by Kenneth Grange for inclusion in an exhibition about the British product designer that opens in July

© SUFFOLK ARCHAEOLOGICAL UNIT (COINS)

● Guernsey Museums and Galleries wish to dispose of a Dennis D-type fire engine, 1974. Most of its equipment has been stripped out and **its tyres are flat**. Has not been started or run for decades.
Contact: Matt Harvey
tel: 01481 706963
email: matt. harvey@cultureleisure.gov.gg

● Rhondda-Cynon-Taff Museum Service wishes to transfer documents on **mining** to interested museums. These include dissertations from the University College, Cardiff, department of mining exploitation 1941-1990; memoranda of the British Coal Board 1954-1987; transactions of the Institute of Mining Engineers 1898-1945 and South Wales Institute of Engineers 1916-1979. Full list of titles available.
Contact: Heather Perry
tel: 01685 886729
email: heather.perry@Rhondda-Cynon-Taff.gov.uk

● Weston-super-Mare Museum offers a variety of **firearms** to an appropriately licensed museum. Full list available.
Contact: Nick Goff
tel: 01934 621028
email: nick.goff@n-somerset.gov.uk

Wanted

● The Design Museum, London, urgently needs a **1958 parking meter** designed by Kenneth Grange and produced for Venner. It was used in Westminster and throughout London during the 1960s; The meter was decommissioned in the early 1990s when Westminster Council auctioned off the meters to private bidders. The museum needs the meter from mid-June to October. It will pay for collection and any refurbishments.
Contact: Melanie Spencer
tel: 020 7940 8779
email: melanies@designmuseum.org

Acquisitions

● Aberdeen Art Gallery & Museums has bought a rare portrait made of enamel on copper by local-born artist **James Cromar Watt** with support from the Art Fund and the National Fund for Acquisitions. Portrait of a Young Woman is now on display at Aberdeen Art Gallery.

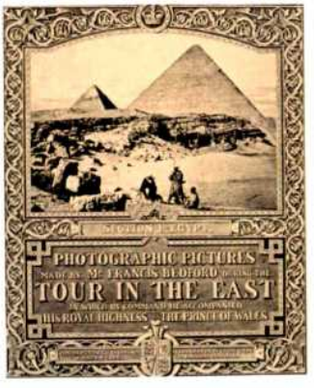
● A collection of rare photographs from the first photography commission for a **Royal trip** abroad has been purchased by Birmingham Library and Archive Services (BLAS). Taken by the British photographer Francis Bedford, they chronicle the Tour in the East made in 1862 by the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII). BLAS acquired a rare set of the 172 photographs resulting from

this tour for £55,000 with grants of £32,500 from the Art Fund and £15,000 from the MLA/V&A Purchase Grant Fund. The collection will be housed in the Library of Birmingham, currently under construction and due to open in 2013.

● The British Library, London, has acquired the archive of poet **Wendy Cope**. The hybrid archive, encompassing material in both paper and electronic form, comprises 15 large storage boxes as well as an extensive collection of email correspondence and computer files. These contain poetic and other literary drafts spanning Cope's entire career, personal and professional correspondence, accounts books and material relating to her early life and career in teaching.

● The Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), London, has acquired a **jade tankard** inlaid with gold and studded with rubies that was made for an Ottoman sultan in the late 16th century, in the imperial capital of Istanbul. This is the first example to enter a British national collection. The tankard was offered to the V&A partly through the Acceptance in Lieu scheme. Additional funding including major grants from the Art Fund (£200,000 and a contribution from the Wolfson Foundation) enabled the V&A to achieve the total remaining cost of £477,500.

Funds to improve archive facilities are going to the Royal Marines Museum, Southsea



Photographs by Francis Bedford, who accompanied the Prince of Wales to the Middle East in 1862, have been acquired by Birmingham Library and Archive Services

Funding

● Colchester and Ipswich Museum Service has **until 21 June** to raise £300,000 to raise money to purchase the Wickham Market hoard of 840 gold coins dating from between 20BC and AD20. It has submitted bids to the Art Fund, the V&A Purchase Grant Fund and the HLF. The Friends of Ipswich Museum has given £10,000 and the Jennings Bequest held by Ipswich Borough Council has given a further £10,000 to act as match funding. Ipswich Museum is showing 200 of the coins until 10 June.

● Eight museums and galleries have shared £75,000 from **Art Fund Collect** to buy new objects from Collect, the fair organised by the Crafts Council and the Art Fund. The successful galleries were: Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery; Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales; Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter; Leeds Museums & Galleries; Norwich Castle Museum & Art Gallery; Nottingham Castle Museum & Art Gallery; and Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery.

● The Royal Marines Museum, Southsea, Hampshire, has been awarded £50,000 by the Heritage Lottery Fund to pay for a new archive storage system enabling the museum's archives to be stored and accessed by visitors and staff in a more effective way. The 2011 special exhibition **Terms of Service** will use aspects of the archive to illustrate unusual aspects of serving in the Royal Marines over the years. A linked programme with schools is also planned.

● Thinktank, Birmingham Science Museum, has received £500,000 from the Wellcome Trust to develop a new **Science Garden**. Opening in June 2012, the garden will be a 2,750m-square outdoor space located at the front of Thinktank. It will focus on the scientific, manufacturing and transport heritage of the West Midlands. The garden will form part of the Eastside City Park, the first major new city centre park in Birmingham for more than a century.

Awards

● Artists Ian Cumberland, Wim Heldens, Sertan Saltan and Louis Smith have been shortlisted for the **2011 BP Portrait Award** at the National Portrait Gallery,

© THE CROWN (ROYAL MARINES); © MUSEUM OF LONDON (QUEEN VICTORIA STREET); © MANCHESTER ART GALLERY/CLAIRE WOOD (MAG); PHOTOGRAPHY DARREN BRITTON (CARDIFF)

MA events calendar

MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION

The MA regularly organises events, conferences and seminars. For further information, see www.museumsassociation.org/events or contact: Lorraine O'Leary 02074266940 lorraine@museumsassociation.org

Members' meetings
30 June 2011, Cardiff
The first in an ongoing series of regional and national meetings, this event runs from 10am to 4pm and is free to all Museums Association (MA) members living and working in Wales.

It includes discussion of local and national policy issues with David Anderson, MA board member and director general of Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales, and Lesley-Anne Kerr of CyMAL: Museums Libraries and Archives Wales. The event also features information on the MA's current activities, with plenty of opportunity for debate and feedback.

Future members' meetings are planned over the next year for London, the East Midlands and Yorkshire and Humberside. For more information on these forthcoming events, visit *www.museumsassociation.org/events*

Mentor refresher
6 July 2011, South East
A workshop for existing mentors of the AMA to receive an update on any developments in the scheme. Come along to catch up with the professional development department, refresh your mentoring skills and share information with other mentors.

Introduction to mentoring
6 July 2011, South East
A workshop for anyone who

London. A record 2,372 entries were received; 55 portraits have been selected for the exhibition at the National Portrait Gallery, which runs from 16 June until 18 September 2011. The winner will be announced on 14 June.

● The selectors for the **2011 Jerwood drawing prize** will be Iwona Blazwick, director, Whitechapel Gallery, London; Tim Marlow, writer, broadcaster and director of exhibitions, White Cube, London; and artist Rachel Whiteread. The deadline for entries is 20 June 2011.

● Three UK museums and heritage sites have come top in 2011's European Union Prize for Cultural Heritage/ Europa Nostra Awards. The **Hackfall Woodland Garden**, Grewelthorpe, North Yorkshire, takes a conservation award; and in the education, training and awareness-raising category, the **Weald and Downland Open Air Museum**, Chichester, West Sussex, and the **Hampshire and Wight Trust for Maritime Archaeology**, Southampton, both won awards.
www.europanostra.org

● **Manchester Art Gallery** has won silver in the Large Visitor Attraction of the Year category of this year's Enjoy England Awards for Excellence. **Chatsworth House**, Derbyshire, took the gold award.

Images such as this – Queen Victoria Street, London, in 1941 and 2010 – have won the Museum of London a Webby Award

● The State Museum of Textile and Industry, Augsburg, Germany, has won the **2011 Micheletti award**. The award is for Europe's best museum of industry, technology and science. The Micheletti award is given for museums that develop creative applications and new forms of interpretation in the area of industry, the world of work or science.

A silver prize has gone to Manchester Art Gallery in the recent Enjoy England awards

● The winners of London's **Dulwich Art Gallery** bicentenary exhibition are: Edori Fertig (first prize); Julie McKenzie (second); and Joan Byrne (third). Lesley O'Mara took the Purchase prize. Joanne Parker won the Art Dog Gallery painting prize.

Web news

● The National Archives has published online for the first time a wealth of material relating to 1951's **Festival of Britain** collection series.
www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/imagelibrary/festival-of-britain-showcase.htm

● The Museum of London's free app **Streetmuseum** has won a People's Voice Webby Award in 2011's Best Use of Device Camera category.

● A youth guide to London's local museums that gives a snapshot of what life would have been like as a teenager across the ages has been launched. It was developed by young people involved in the Cultural Olympiad project, **Stories of the World: London**.
www.untoldlondon.org.

● The Victoria and Albert Museum, London, has launched its **new website**. It was designed by digital specialists Other media.
www.vam.ac.uk.

● The World Rugby Museum, London, has joined **rugby** fans and collectors of related memorabilia who are sharing their collections on a new website designed to create a community of fans.
http://rugbymoments.net

Miscellaneous

● The 19th-century ship **HMS Warrior**, celebrating its 150th birthday at Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, has received its accreditation from the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council.

● Chichester District's new museum, due to open next spring, will be called the **Novium...Footprints through History** after the Roman name of Chichester, Noviomagus Reginorum.

is committed to continuing professional development and wants to become a mentor for the AMA. We will guide you through all stages in the mentoring process.

To book CPD events, email the name, date and location of the event you wish to attend, along with your contact details, to cpd@museumsassociation.org or call 020 7426 6955

AMA
7 September 2011, London

A workshop for anyone undertaking or thinking about undertaking the Associate of the Museums Association (AMA). The morning looks at the AMA's knowledge journal, how to find a mentor and how to write a CPD plan. In the afternoon we will explore the updated AMA criteria, the work-based project and the professional review. Participants are welcome to come for the entire day or just the afternoon.

David Anderson will be among those speaking at the MA's members' meeting in Cardiff

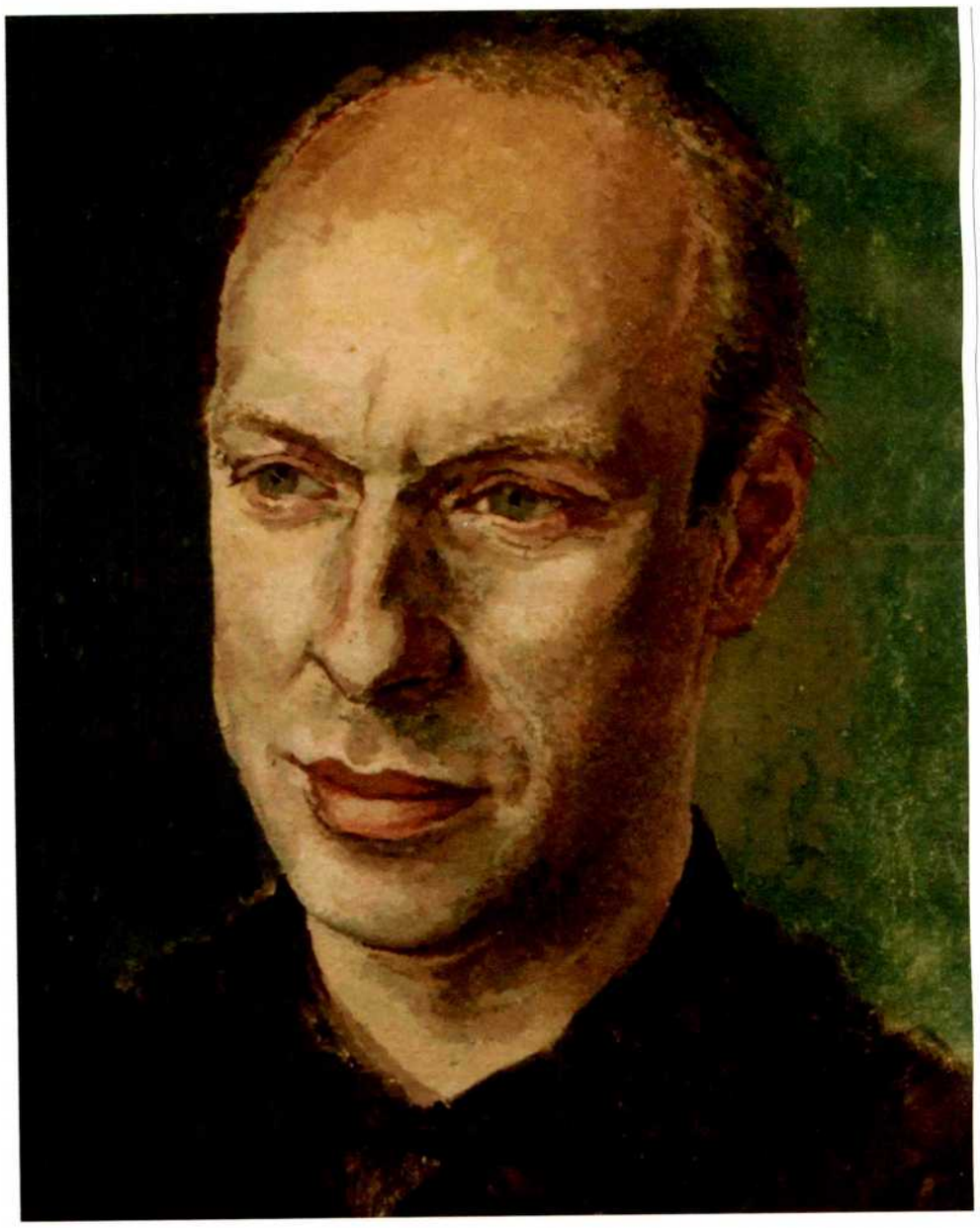
Museums Association annual conference and exhibition
3-4 October 2011, The Brighton Centre, Brighton
Brighton plays host to the Museums Association conference and exhibition 2011. This year we are running the whole event over two days with reduced costs for delegates to attend.

The event is the most important in the museum calendar and a must-attend for all working in museums and galleries, including suppliers of products and services. It brings together UK professionals to debate the latest thinking and discover new ideas.

The preliminary themes for the conference are: **Next top model**: creating the museums of the future; **Innovate**: thinking your way out of the crisis; and **Get connected**: creating and sustaining networks.
For more information, visit www.museumsassociation.org/conference

Portrait of Brian Eno by Tom Phillips, 1984, Ipswich Art School

Emma Roodhouse



© TOM PHILLIPS

"This portrait was painted by Royal Academician Tom Phillips, who was Brian Eno's tutor at Ipswich Art School in 1964. The fact that the painting was completed some 20 years later shows that the two men made a very close and long-term connection.

They first met when Phillips was attracted to teach art in Ipswich – which he described as a sleepy little place – by the experimental courses run by the head of department, Roy Ascott.

Phillips quickly picked out the young student Eno, predicting he'd go on to greater things. Phillips had a profound influence on his protégé's career, not least by introducing him to the kind of avant-garde music that would inform his later output as an 'ambient' musician and in-demand producer.

Emma Roodhouse is curator of art at Colchester and Ipswich Museums

Something of a poet and musician himself, Phillips is also well known for A Humument, an illustrated 'treated' novel he created by applying collages to the pages of a little-known Victorian book. The work gained a fanatical cult following and selections from it formed the opera IRMA, which Eno recorded in 1978.

As well as turning Eno on to the likes of John Cage, Phillips joined him for games of what they called 'piano tennis', in which they hurled balls at the wires of stripped pianos lined up in the hall.

I think that was pretty typical of the Ipswich approach. Students were encouraged to think about their art via a series of 'happenings'. One of our exhibition designers was a student at the same time as Eno and she's always telling us stories of how they'd be encouraged to go off and make films or indulge in a giant game of Twister.

The art school was a hotbed of creativity at the time. Maggi Hambling was also a student and visiting lecturers included the likes of artist and sculptor Eduardo Paolozzi. Indeed, some of the sculpture staff went on to work with Henry Moore.

Our exhibition tells the story of what was stirring deep in the heart of Suffolk and it's complemented by a rotating collection of current work by tutors and students from Suffolk New College and University Campus, which provides an intriguing mix of the past and the present.

This show is also a fundraising project to help us buy the old building. The art school was founded in 1859 and finally closed its doors in 1997. Our lease runs until next March and the aim is to purchase it and provide a new permanent gallery space for Ipswich and beyond."

Interview by John Holt.
The Class Of... runs at Ipswich Art School until 12 June

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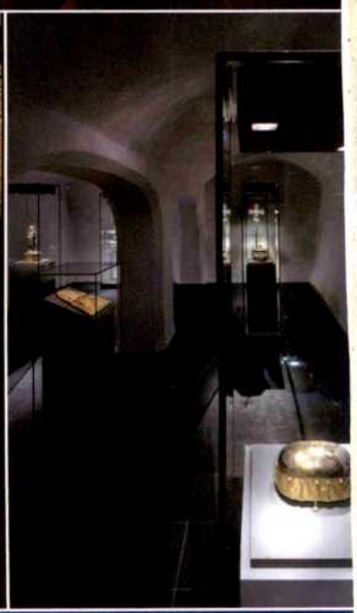

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